

# Māturīdī Theology

Edited by  
LEJLA DEMIRI,  
PHILIP DORROLL,  
and DALE J. CORREA

*Sapientia Islamica*

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**Mohr Siebeck**

# Sapientia Islamica

## Studies in Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism

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# Māturīdī Theology

A Bilingual Reader

Edited by

Lejla Demiri, Philip Dorroll and Dale J. Correa

Mohr Siebeck

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*In memoriam Josef van Ess*  
*18 April 1934 – 20 November 2021*



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## Note on Transliteration and Dates

The transliteration of Arabic names follows that of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three* (EI3). Technical terms in Arabic are all italicised except for terms that have become common in English (e. g. Hadith, Islam, imam, mufti, sufi, Sunni, Shi'i). The *tā' marbūṭa* (ﺓ/ة) is rendered as 'a' (e. g. sūra), or as 'at' when the word is in the construct state (*iḍāfa*) (e. g. Sūrat al-Fātiḥa). Double dates are used in reference to the Islamic (A. H.) and Common Era (C. E.) calendars (e. g. 716/1316).



## Introduction



## An Overview of the Current Scholarship on Māturīdī *Kalām* in Arabic, Persian, and European Languages

DALE J. CORREA

Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī al-Ḥanafī (d. 333/944) was a theologian, a jurist, and an exegete hailing from a village outside of Samarqand, known as Māturīt/Māturīd. He was extremely influential in the formation of the Samarqandī/Transoxanian Ḥanafī theological tradition, although the attribution of ‘a doctrinal school’ to his name did not happen until generations after him.<sup>1</sup> His principal teacher was Abū Naṣr Aḥmad al-‘Iyāḍī (d. last third of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century in skirmishes with Turks), through whom al-Māturīdī can trace an intellectual lineage to Abū Bakr al-Jūzjānī (d. 250/864), Abū Sulaymān al-Jūzjānī (d. 200/816), and Muḥammad al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805).<sup>2</sup> Despite leaving behind only a few works for later generations to study, al-Māturīdī has captured the scholarly imagination across the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds – albeit to varying degrees. North American English-language scholarship on al-Māturīdī and the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī school of thought is just beginning to blossom, while the European and Middle Eastern scholarly relationship with the scholar and those whom he influenced has a comparatively longer history. Much of that history is entangled in the understanding of Ḥanafī theologians as ‘Māturīdīs’, when in fact their identity was more complex than an eponym.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilferd Madelung, “al-Māturīdī”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. P. Bearman, et al. ([http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5045](http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5045)) (accessed 15 December 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Rudolph, “Abū Naṣr al-‘Iyāḍī”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, ed. Kate Fleet, et al. ([http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_23155](http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23155)) (accessed 8 December 2020); ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍī’a*, ed. M. A. Ahmad, Hyderabad: Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyya, 1989, vol. 1, p. 70.



## Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī: Life and Works

The field of Islamic studies generally understands the Transoxanian Ḥanafīs as ‘Māturīdīs’, principally on the basis of the work of Wilferd Madelung.<sup>3</sup> However, they are more accurately understood as ‘Samarqandī Ḥanafīs’ in their formative (1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries) and early post-formative (5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> centuries) periods because of the priority of their regional identification with Samarqand and *Mā warā’ al-nahr*, the area ‘beyond the [Oxus] river’ (in English, Transoxania).<sup>4</sup> The Ḥanafīs of Transoxania defined themselves as part of – not separate from – the Ḥanafīyya through reference to Samarqand and to al-Māturīdī in a constellation of theological issues. In their later period, these scholars would formally self-identify (and be identified) as Māturīdīs.

Understanding the nature of Transoxanian intellectual networks beyond the region, and the question of how Transoxanian scholars viewed their participation in an Islamicate intellectual tradition, presents unique challenges because historiographic and prosopographic materials from before the Mongol invasion are few and far between. A preliminary attempt to describe the intellectual networks of Transoxanian scholars of this period by Shahab Ahmed has indicated that they benefited from the work of scholars in other regions, at the very least through the latters’ texts, if not through personal study.<sup>5</sup> However, this process of influence, as shown by Ahmed, seems to dwindle by the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century. Wilferd Madelung and Muhammed Tancî have also specified which Ḥanafī works from this region profess a thoroughly articulated Transoxanian theology that vigorously distinguishes itself from that of other regions and schools of thought.<sup>6</sup> Appreciating Transoxanian Ḥanafī scholars’ emphasis on a regional specification is integral not only to revisiting the characterisation of Transoxanian Ḥanafīs as Māturīdīs but also to understanding their theological positions and the ways in which they viewed their own intellectual tradition.

<sup>3</sup> See Wilferd Madelung, “Māturīdiyya”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. P. Bearman, et al. ([http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5046](http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5046)) (accessed 15 December 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Dale J. Correa, “Taking a Theological Turn in Legal Theory. Regional Priority and Theology in Transoxanian Ḥanafī Thought”, *Locating the Sharī’a. Legal Fluidity in Theory, History and Practice*, ed. Sohaira Siddiqui and Nathan French, Leiden: Brill, 2019, pp. 111–26. See also Ulrich Rudolph, “Ḥanafī Theological Tradition and Māturīdism”, *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke, New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 280–96.

<sup>5</sup> Shahab Ahmed, “Mapping the World of a Scholar in Sixth/Twelfth Century Bukhāra. Regional Tradition in Medieval Islamic Scholarship as Reflected in a Bibliography”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 120/1 (2000), pp. 24–43.

<sup>6</sup> Wilferd Madelung, “The Spread of Māturīdism and the Turks”, *Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos Árabes e Islâmicos, Coimbra-Lisboa 1968*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971, pp. 109–68; Muhammed b. Tavīt et-Tancî, “Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī”, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyât Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1–2 (1955), pp. 3–12.

The impression in the field that the Māturīdī school was eponymous in its origins has been both buttressed and challenged by scholarship that focuses on al-Māturīdī himself. Excellent studies of al-Māturīdī's life and thought – notably, by Ayyub Ali, Salim Daccache, Balqāsim al-Ghālī, 'Alī 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Maghribī, Sayyid Luṭfullāh Jalālī, Ulrich Rudolph, Mustafa Cerić, J. Meric Pessagno, and most recently, Hureyre Kam and Kayhan Özeykal – provide rich historical and intellectual background for the development of Ḥanafī thought and the eventual formation of the Māturīdī identity. Ali's *Aqīdat al-Islām wa-l-Imām al-Māturīdī* was a foundational review of the history of Islamic theology with a particular focus on locating Ḥanafī theology and al-Māturīdī within the development of the discipline.<sup>7</sup> This study is significant for its contemporary academic contribution to understanding the relationship between al-Māturīdī, Abū Ḥanīfa, and Islamic theology by establishing Ḥanafī theology as a thread of Islamic theology. Imām ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī wa-ārā'uh al-kalāmiyya by al-Maghribī takes a deeper dive into the life and works of al-Māturīdī.<sup>8</sup> Like Ali and al-Ghālī below, al-Maghribī wrote his study following the publication of Fathalla Kholeif's edition of al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, which paved the way for more focused study of al-Māturīdī's theology. Al-Maghribī's contribution reviews al-Māturīdī's life and follows the main topics of the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* to elucidate his theological views. It concludes with a study of the theological differences between al-Māturīdī and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/936), and al-Māturīdī and the Mu'tazila, as well as commentary on where al-Māturīdī sits on the spectrum between the two.

In 1988, Daccache completed his doctoral thesis on al-Māturīdī's theology of creation, which was revised and published as a monograph in 2008.<sup>9</sup> Daccache situates al-Māturīdī's work in its Samarqandī context, and focuses in particular on al-Māturīdī's theological epistemology and his understanding of God's act of creation, including its implications for metaphysics in general. In 1989, al-Ghālī published his *Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī. Ḥayātuh wa-ārā'uh al-'aqdiyya*.<sup>10</sup> Al-Ghālī's rich exploration contextualises al-Māturīdī's education, profession, and scholarship among near-contemporaries throughout Muslim society. He focusses on al-Māturīdī's views of God and humans, and the relationship between the two, using al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* as a launching point. More recently, Jalālī published *Tārīkh va 'aqāyid-i māturīdiyya*, which takes a more

<sup>7</sup> A. K. M. Ayyub Ali, *Aqīdat al-Islām wa-l-Imām al-Māturīdī*, Dhaka: al-Mu'assasa al-Islāmiyya Banghlādīsh, 1983.

<sup>8</sup> 'Alī 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Maghribī, *Imām ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī wa-ārā'uh al-kalāmiyya*, Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1985.

<sup>9</sup> Salim Daccache, *Le problème de la création du monde et son contexte rationnel et historique dans la doctrine d'Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (333/944)*, Beirut: Recherches de l'Université Saint-Joseph, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Balqāsim al-Ghālī, *Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī. Ḥayātuh wa-ārā'uh al-'aqdiyya*, Tunis: Dār al-Turki li-l-Nashr, 1989.

geographically-centred approach to al-Māturīdī's biography and the study of his theological ideas.<sup>11</sup> Jalālī's study also includes a comparison of Māturīdī, Ash'arī, Mu'tazilī, and Imāmī doctrines.

Rudolph's *Al-Maturidi und die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand* was a landmark study for advancing the understanding of Ḥanafī-Māturīdī theology in Europe and North America.<sup>12</sup> This essential study became all the more accessible to English-speaking researchers after it was translated from the original German into English by Rodrigo Adem in 2014.<sup>13</sup> Rudolph takes great pains to reconstruct the milieu in which al-Māturīdī studied, taught, and developed his ideas and works. A remarkable observation from Rudolph's work is that al-Māturīdī – despite his invectives against the school – was deeply influenced by, and owed much to, the Mu'tazila, and in particular, to Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī/al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931). In contrast, Cerić's *Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islām. A Study of the Theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī* takes a theologically sympathetic approach by focusing on al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* in great detail.<sup>14</sup> Cerić guides his reader through the logic of al-Māturīdī's argumentation, connecting it to the broader *ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a* creed as well as to related (and essential) works of theology, exegesis, Hadith, and law. Earlier Pessagno contributed to the growing Western understanding of al-Māturīdī and his oeuvre through scholarship about one of al-Māturīdī's great influencers, Ibn al-Shabīb (d. first half of 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century), and al-Māturīdī's approach to a number of key concepts, including evil, acquisition (*kasb*), will (*irāda*), and power (*qudra*).<sup>15</sup>

Hureyre Kam, in recent years, has expanded the field's understanding of al-Māturīdī's thought by focusing on his conceptualisation of evil.<sup>16</sup> Intriguingly, Kam argues that al-Māturīdī conceives of evil – or rather, theodicy – as a proof of God's very existence. Kayhan Özeykal has also shed light on al-Māturīdī's unique contributions to Islamic theology through the latter's middle stance on the ratiocentric-theocentric dichotomy.<sup>17</sup> Özeykal finds that while al-Māturīdī's

<sup>11</sup> Sayyid Luṭfullāh Jalālī, *Tārīkh va 'aqāyid-i māturīdiyya*, Qom: Markaz-i Muṭāla'āt va Taḥqīqāt-i Adyān va Madhāhib, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Ulrich Rudolph, *Al-Maturidi und die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Ulrich Rudolph, *Al-Maturidi and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand*, trans. Rodrigo Adem, Leiden: Brill, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Mustafa Cerić, *Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islām. A Study of the Theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> J. Meric Pessagno, "Intellect and Religious Assent", *The Muslim World*, 69/1 (1979), pp. 18–27; "Irāda, Ikhtiyār, Qudra, Kasb. The View of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 104/1 (1984), pp. 177–91; "The Reconstruction of the Thought of Muḥammad Ibn Shabīb", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 104/3 (1984), pp. 445–53.

<sup>16</sup> Hureyre Kam, *Das Böse als Gottesbeweis. Die Theodizee al-Māturīdis im Lichte seiner Epistemologie, Kosmologie und Ontologie*, Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Kayhan Özeykal, *Theological-Ethics and Epistemology. The Euthyphro Dilemma and the Metaethics of al-Māturīdī*, PhD diss., Sakarya University, Sakarya, 2017.

theological-ethics views God as the paramount source of morality, he conceives of reason as the foundation for the ordering of creation and as the primary conduit for human understanding of moral values. Zaid Khalid al-Zuriqat has also focused on the interplay of reason and revelation in his article, “Dalīl maʿrifat Allāh bi-l-ʿaql fī falsafat al-Māturīdī al-kalāmiyya”.<sup>18</sup> Al-Zuriqat concludes that reason is the spark for all pathways of knowledge to God for al-Māturīdī, from the senses to testimony to contemplation of revelation.

## Historical Studies

Recent scholarship has relied upon and revised that of the above scholars to reveal more detail about Transoxania and Ḥanafī theology before, during, and after the career of al-Māturīdī. In particular, Philip Dorroll’s contribution to our understanding of al-Māturīdī’s metaphysics points to Anke von Kuegelgen and Ashirbek Muminov’s work on epigraphic evidence from the Jakerdize cemetery that elucidates the divisions among Ḥanafī scholars in Samarqand.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Dorroll explores the reception of al-Māturīdī’s metaphysical notion of flux/*taqallub* (or lack thereof) by Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) in the latter’s *Tabṣirat al-adilla*, lending the field a crucial diachronic connection between the opaque thought of the eponym and the mature, lucid writing of later generations of Ḥanafī thinkers. Likewise, Philipp Bruckmayr’s “The Spread and Persistence of Māturīdī Kalām and Underlying Dynamics” explores how al-Māturīdī became an eponym for the Transoxanian Ḥanafī theological school, and where and how al-Māturīdī’s ideas did and did not endure.<sup>20</sup>

M. Sait Özervalı also connects al-Māturīdī’s thought to that of his intellectual progeny in an effort to authenticate the unique manuscript of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* held at Cambridge.<sup>21</sup> Using *Tabṣirat al-adilla*, Özervalı is able to demonstrate that the Cambridge manuscript is reflected either verbatim or by meaning in al-Nasafī’s text. This article has helped dispel concerns in the field with trusting a unique manuscript to represent a theological eponym’s master work. Özervalı has also contributed to the field’s understanding of the later Māturīdī school, from the beginning of the Ottoman Empire and onwards.<sup>22</sup> Qadrī Muḥammad

<sup>18</sup> Zaid Khalid al-Zuriqat, “Dalīl maʿrifat Allāh bi-l-ʿaql fī falsafat al-Māturīdī al-kalāmiyya”, *Dirāsāt. Al-ʿUlūm al-insāniyya wa-l-ijtimāʿiyya*, 46/3 (2019), pp. 493–501.

<sup>19</sup> Philip Dorroll, “The Universe in Flux. Reconsidering Abū Maṣʿūr al-Māturīdī’s Metaphysics and Epistemology”, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 27/2 (2016), pp. 119–35.

<sup>20</sup> Philipp Bruckmayr, “The Spread and Persistence of Māturīdī Kalām and Underlying Dynamics”, *Iran and the Caucasus*, 13 (2009), pp. 59–92.

<sup>21</sup> M. Sait Özervalı, “The Authenticity of the Manuscript of Māturīdī’s *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. A Re-examination”, *İslām Araştırmaları Dergisi/Turkish Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1 (1997), pp. 19–29.

<sup>22</sup> M. Sait Özervalı, “Attempts to Revitalize Kalām in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

al-Dīb likewise turns to works outside of the *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* for some impression of what al-Māturīdī's views may have been on issues not otherwise covered in his main, extant theological treatise.<sup>23</sup> Relying on al-Māturīdī's *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, al-Dīb is able to parse out two major opinions by al-Māturīdī on the issue of *imāma*: how the *imām* is selected, and the qualifications of the *imām*. Relatedly, Iranian scholars Shadi Nafisi and Somayeh Khalili Ashtiyani investigate the place of *ahl al-bayt* in the narrations about *imāma* quoted in al-Māturīdī's and 'Umar Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī's (d. 537/1142) works of Qur'anic exegesis.<sup>24</sup> They find that, although al-Māturīdī and al-Nasafī generally honour the *ahl al-bayt*, the scholars do not rely on *ahl al-bayt* as sources for the interpretation of verses related to the Prophet's family and their leadership of the community.

Robert Wisnovsky notes a major shift in the intellectual history of Islamic theology and philosophy through al-Māturīdī. In particular, he focuses on one of al-Māturīdī's most renowned followers, Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1099), and the influence that Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) seemed to have on him.<sup>25</sup> Wisnovsky is able to demonstrate how the 'philosophising' of Islamic theology was not a lone product of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) efforts; rather, it can be traced to the lifetime of Ibn Sīnā and those he inspired, including al-Bazdawī. Taking us into the present day, Ramon Harvey puts al-Māturīdī into conversation with contemporary phenomenology and analytic theology in order to show how a contemporary Muslim philosophical theology is possible in such a space.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly tracing the dynamics between other Islamic sciences and Islamic theology, Aron Zysow has demonstrated in both his monograph and notable article, "Mu'tazilism and Māturīdism in Ḥanafī Legal Theory", how theology affects legal theory.<sup>27</sup> Zysow carefully builds an intellectual history of the as-

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(Islamic theology)", *The Muslim World*, 89/1 (1999), pp. 90–105; M. Sait Özervah, "Theology in the Ottoman Lands", *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke, New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 567–86.

<sup>23</sup> Qadrī Muḥammad al-Dīb, "Manhajīyyat al-Imām al-Māturīdī fī mu'ālaḥat ishkālāt fī qaḍīyyat al-imāma," *al-Dirāya*, 19/2 (2019), pp. 89–140.

<sup>24</sup> Somayeh Khalili Ashtiyani and Shadi Nafisi, "A Critical Study of Maturidi and Nasafi's Views on Verses related to AhlulBayt (PBUT)," *Tahqīqāt-i Ulūm-i Qur'ān va Ḥadīth*, 12/1 (2015), pp. 145–76.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Avicennan Turn in Sunni Theology", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 14 (2004), pp. 65–100. It is also worth consulting Madelung on the relationship between Ḥanafī theology and Ash'arī theology in the same time period; see his "Abu l-Mu'in al-Nasafi and Ash'ari Theology", *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth*, ed. Ian Richard Netton, Clifford Edmund Bosworth, and Carole Hillenbrand, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 318–220.

<sup>26</sup> Ramon Harvey, *Transcendent God, Rational World. A Māturīdī Theology*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021.

<sup>27</sup> Aron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty. An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory*, Atlanta GA: Lockwood Press, 2013; "Mu'tazilism and Māturīdism in Ḥanafī Legal Theory", *Studies in Islamic Legal Theory*, ed. Bernard Weiss, Leiden: Brill, 2002, pp. 235–65.

sociation of key theological concepts with legal theoretical prescriptions in the work of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 539/1144), showing how theology is the essential foundation to the logic and structure of other disciplines for Ḥanafīs. Dale J. Correa expands Zysow’s study to trace the development of the epistemological relationship between theology and legal theory in the Ḥanafī school from al-Māturīdī’s generation to that of ‘Umar Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī.<sup>28</sup> Using testimony as her lens, she finds that theology establishes and continues to re-establish the basis upon which legal theory is able to operate. Najah Nadi similarly builds on Zysow’s findings in her study of Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d. 792/1390), exploring how Islamic theology and Arabic logic were integrated into legal theory.<sup>29</sup> Nadi focuses on theological principles, demonstrating how they play an epistemological role in theology, logic, and legal theory, as they deal with the objects and classification of knowledge, the character and typology of epistemic indication, and the nature of theoretical investigation.

### Critical Editions and Textual Studies

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the works of al-Māturīdī and key Ḥanafī theologians came to the notice and intense focus of Western scholars. Manfred Götz introduced the field to al-Māturīdī’s exegesis, *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, well before any comprehensive edition would be completed.<sup>30</sup> He also did so through the lens of a later commentary by the still underappreciated ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, thus capturing two key and previously unfamiliar texts in one study. Walid Saleh recently continued the effort to study al-Māturīdī’s immense exegesis by using it as a lens for understanding the famous exegete Abū Ja’far al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923).<sup>31</sup> However, the most impactful edition of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Fathalla Kholeif’s 1970 publication of al-Māturīdī’s *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, based on the Cambridge manuscript.<sup>32</sup> This edition and study opened the door for more scholars to approach al-Māturīdī’s theology directly.

Angelika Brodersen has introduced to the field relatively unfamiliar scholars who further our understanding of the Ḥanafī theological presence in Trans-

<sup>28</sup> Dale J. Correa, *Testifying Beyond Experience. Theories of Akhbār and the Boundaries of Community in Transoxanian Islamic Thought, 10–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE*, PhD diss., New York University, New York NY, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Najah Nadi, *Theorising the Relationship between Kalām and Uṣūl al-Fiqh. The Theological-Legal Epistemology of Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d. 792/1390)*, PhD diss., University of Oxford, Oxford, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Manfred Götz, “Māturīdī und sein *Kitāb Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*”, *Islam*, 41 (1965), pp. 27–70.

<sup>31</sup> Walid Saleh, “Rereading al-Ṭabarī through al-Māturīdī. New Light on the Third Century Hijrī”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies*, 18/2 (2016), pp. 180–209.

<sup>32</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Fathalla Kholeif, Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1970.

oxania. Her edition of Abū Iṣḥāq al-Ṣaffār al-Bukhārī's (d. 534/1139) *Talkhīṣ al-adilla li-qawā'id al-tawḥīd*, and the accompanying studies, elucidate the complex intellectual networks between Bukhara and Samarqand in the premodern period.<sup>33</sup> Her edition of Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī's (d. latter half of 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century) *Tamhīd fī bayan al-tawḥīd* makes relevant and useful a long-overlooked work of the Māturīdī school that persisted in its popularity through the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Ayedh Aldosari has made it possible for the field to engage with later Ḥanafī theology and its evolutionary trajectory in the form of 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Khabbāzī's (d. 691/1292) *Kitāb al-Hādī*.<sup>35</sup>

Lastly, it is necessary to mention the editions of essential theological works attributed to Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī, Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī (d. 482/1089), 'Umar Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī, as well as to Abū l-Thanā' Maḥmūd al-Lāmishī (d. early 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century). Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī's theology has been made more accessible through the work of Marie Bernand and Éric Chaumont, who edited and composed a brief study of *Kitāb Ma'rifat al-ḥujaj al-shar'iyya*.<sup>36</sup> It is a work of legal theory that gives evidence of many of the theological associations of the discipline, aligning with what Fakhr al-Islām's brother Abū l-Yusr reveals in his *Uṣūl al-dīn* (edited by Hans Peter Linss and Aḥmad Ḥijāzī Aḥmad Saqqā).<sup>37</sup> Although not an edition itself, but rather a descriptive study of a manuscript ripe for editing, 'Imād Ḥasan Marzūq's article on 'Umar Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī's *Maṭla' al-nujūm wa-majma' al-'ulūm* makes for a crucial entry point for the study of this encyclopedic tome of Islamic sciences, including theology.<sup>38</sup> The Bazdawī brothers and 'Umar Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī were contemporaries with one other notable theologian, al-Lāmishī. His work of theology, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd li-qawā'id al-tawḥīd*, would have remained in relative obscurity were it not for the critical edition produced by 'Abd al-Majīd Turkī.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī, *Talkhīṣ al-adilla li-qawā'id al-tawḥīd*, ed. Angelika Brodersen, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Angelika Brodersen, *Zwischen Māturīdīya und Aṣ'ariya. Abū Ṣakūr as-Sālimī und sein Tamhīd fī bayān at-tawḥīd*, Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Ayedh Aldosari, *Ḥanafī Māturīdism. Trajectories of a Theological Legacy, with a Study and Critical Edition of al-Khabbāzī's Kitāb al-Hādī*, Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Marie Bernand and Éric Chaumont, *Livre où repose la connaissance des preuves légales. Kitāb fīhi Ma'rifat al-ḥujaj al-shar'iyya*, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2003.

<sup>37</sup> 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hans Peter Linss and Aḥmad Ḥijāzī Aḥmad Saqqā, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li-l-Turāth, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> 'Imād Ḥasan Marzūq, "Makhṭūṭ (Maṭla' al-nujūm wa-majma' al-'ulūm) li-l-Imām Najm al-Dīn Abī Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Nasafī. Dirāsa waṣfiyya taḥlīliyya", *Majallat Kullīyyat al-Ādāb Banhā*, 46/1 (2016), pp. 1–50.

<sup>39</sup> Abū l-Thanā' Maḥmūd ibn Zayd al-Lāmishī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd li-qawā'id al-tawḥīd*, ed. 'Abd al-Majīd Turkī, Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1995.

## Concluding Remarks

The study of al-Māturīdī and the Ḥanafī theological school that came to bear his name is recently, and finally, an area of deep interest for Western academe. Long a problem of access to sources, more of the central works of this school have been edited and published in venues accessible to European and North American scholars and libraries. Furthermore, the Māturīdī school is not so easily dismissed now as too similar to the Ashʿarī school to not warrant intensive investigation; rather, it has been identified as a significant, historically influential thread of intellectual development that encourages Western academics to engage with Muslim scholarship from South Asia and the Middle East. Philip Dorroll introduces us to the rich and dominating Turkish academe and Turkish scholars' foundational contributions to the study of Ḥanafī-Māturīdī theology in the following section.

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## Māturīdī Studies in Turkish

### Historical Outline and Main Contributions

PHILIP DORROLL

By far the largest number and greatest diversity of modern academic studies of Māturīdī theology have been done in Turkish. Modern Turkish scholars and theologians, particularly in the last two decades, have fostered a genuine renaissance in Māturīdī studies. Due to the historical importance and theological range of this tradition of scholarship, it will first be necessary to provide a brief summary of its historical development, especially given the fact that the achievements of this tradition of study have remained underappreciated (or simply unknown) outside of Turkey. This tradition has experienced three stages of development: (1) The rediscovery of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, (2) the earliest scholarly treatments of al-Māturīdī's own texts in the 1980s and 1990s, and (3) 'The Māturīdī Renaissance' of the 2000s to the present day.

As is well-known, Ottoman-era Sunni *kalām* was methodologically syncretistic and incorporated both Ash'arī and Māturīdī texts and arguments (in addition to mystical Sufi strains of theology and numerous other intellectual traditions and influences).<sup>1</sup> The first few decades of the Turkish Republic witnessed a rediscovery of the importance of al-Māturīdī in particular, as some intellectuals in this period saw the rationalistic elements of his theology as conducive to the creative renewal of Sunni thought in the modern age.<sup>2</sup> The great Ottoman and Early Republican theologian Mehmed Şerefettin Yalpkaya (1879–1947) included al-Māturīdī in his widely influential 1932 article<sup>3</sup> on the history of Islamic theology among Turkic peoples, thus laying the foundation for al-Māturīdī's importance in modern Turkish theology and scholarship. Two of the first professors in the first theology faculty founded in the Turkish Republic

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<sup>1</sup> See M. Sait Özervarlı, "Theology in the Ottoman Lands", *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke, New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 567–86.

<sup>2</sup> See Rıdvan Özdiñç, *Akıl, İrade, Hürriyet. Son Dönem Osmanlı Dini Düşüncesinde İrade Meselesi*, İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2013, pp. 108–9.

<sup>3</sup> Mehmed Şerefettin Yalpkaya, "Türk Kelâmcıları", *Darülfünun İlahiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 23 (1932), pp. 1–19.

(at Ankara University), Yusuf Ziya Yörükan (1887–1954) and Muhammed et-Tanci (1918–1974), produced short studies of Mâtûrîdî theology in the 1950s.<sup>4</sup>

The first extensive scholarly studies of Mâtûrîdî theology in Turkish were produced in the 1980s and 1990s. These were significant for their careful analytical use of al-Mâtûrîdî's own extant works, his theological text *Kitâb al-Tawhîd* and his Qur'an commentary *Tâwîlât al-Qur'ân*. These studies include: Kemal Işık, *The Understanding of Faith, God, and Prophethood in Mâtûrîdî's Theological System* (1980);<sup>5</sup> M. Saim Yeprem, *Mâtûrîdî and Free Will* (1984);<sup>6</sup> Hasan Şahin, *Religion According to Mâtûrîdî* (1987);<sup>7</sup> M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu, *The Conception of Human Freedom according to Mâtûrîdî and Nasafî* (1992);<sup>8</sup> Hanifi Özcan, *The Problem of Knowledge in Mâtûrîdî* (1993);<sup>9</sup> Adil Bebek, *The Problem of Sin in Mâtûrîdî* (1998);<sup>10</sup> and Hanifi Özcan, *Religious Pluralism in Mâtûrîdî* (1999).<sup>11</sup> M. Sait Özervarlı's *Pursuits of Renewal in Kalâm. The End of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (1998)<sup>12</sup> is also worthy of note because it includes consideration of the influence of Mâtûrîdism in the history of modern Sunnî *kalâm*. The titles of these works provide a good sense of the future direction Mâtûrîdî studies would take in Turkey. Following the interest in al-Mâtûrîdî in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, these first scholarly studies of al-Mâtûrîdî's theology focused on themes crucial to understanding the importance of Sunni theological heritage for approaching contemporary philosophical and moral issues. These include the definition of religion and faith, problems in theological anthropology, and the extent to which al-Mâtûrîdî's work can be used to inform contemporary debates concerning ethics and Islamic religious identity in the modern period.

I term the current stage of Mâtûrîdî studies in Turkey (the 2000s to the present day) 'The Mâtûrîdî Renaissance', because this period has seen the most productive and theologically sophisticated florescence of Mâtûrîdî thought in

<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Ziya Yörükan, "İslâm Akaid Sisteminde Gelişmeler ve Ebu Mansur-i Matürîdî", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2/2–3 (1953), pp. 127–42; Muhammed et-Tanci, "Abû Mansûr el-Mâtûrîdî", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 4/1–2 (1955), pp. 1–12.

<sup>5</sup> Kemal Işık, *Maturîdî'nin Kelam Sisteminde İman, Allah ve Peygamberlik Anlayışı*, Ankara: Fütüvvet Yayınları, 1980.

<sup>6</sup> M. Saim Yeprem, *İrâde Hürriyeti ve İmâm Mâtûrîdî*, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 1984.

<sup>7</sup> Hasan Şahin, *Mâtûrîdî'ye Göre Din*, Kayseri: Yeni Matbaa, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu, *Mâtûrîdî ve Neseî'ye Göre İnsan Hürriyeti Kavramı*, İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Hanifi Özcan, *Mâtûrîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Adil Bebek, *Matürîdî'de Günah Problemi*, İstanbul: Rağbet Yayınları, 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Hanifi Özcan, *Mâtûrîdî'de Dini Çoğulculuk*, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> M. Sait Özervarlı, *Kelâm'da Yenilik Arayışları. 19. Sonu – 20. Yüzyıl Başı*, İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 1998.

modern history. Over the past two decades, numerous scholarly books, articles,<sup>13</sup> conferences, edited volumes, theses and dissertations,<sup>14</sup> and popular works and presentations have been produced in Turkish, in total running into many hundreds of individual works. It is therefore impossible to enumerate them all here. Instead, brief mention will be made of the three key areas of advancement in this period: historical studies, critical editions and translations, and systematic theological contributions.

## Historical Studies

One of the influential works that set the stage for the current Mâturîdî renaissance was Sönmez Kutlu's edited volume, *Mâturîdî and Mâturîdism. Historical Background, Life, Works, Ideas, and the Mâturîdî School* (2003).<sup>15</sup> This highly useful collection of essays included Turkish translations of important articles by non-Turkish scholars such as Philipp Bruckmayr, Keith Lewinstein, Wilferd Madelung, Ulrich Rudolph, W. Montgomery Watt, and Ziyadov Yunusovich.<sup>16</sup> This meant that many of the key findings of the latest global research on the history and context of Mâturîdî theology in English, French, German, Russian, and Uzbek sources were now available in Turkish. In addition, the volume included studies of al-Mâturîdî by the two leading figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century Turkish Islamic theology, Bekir Topaloğlu and Hüseyin Atay. It also incorporated important studies by leading contemporary Turkish scholars of al-Mâturîdî, including by Kutlu himself, Hanifi Özcan, Talip Özdeş, and Şükrü Özen. This volume also included a key historical study (originally published in Uzbek) by Ashirbek Muminov and Anke von Kügelgen<sup>17</sup> that brought to light key biographical and contextual details about al-Mâturîdî that they discovered in previously unknown manuscript sources in Istanbul. These sources revealed that al-Mâturîdî was part

<sup>13</sup> Article references and texts can be located in this database: <http://ktp.isam.org.tr/?url=makale/findrecords.php> (accessed 4 December 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Theses can be located in this database: <http://ktp.isam.org.tr/?url=tezilh/findrecords.php> (accessed 4 December 2020).

<sup>15</sup> Sönmez Kutlu (ed.), *İmam Mâturîdî ve Maturidilik. Tarihi Arka Plan, Hayatı, Eserleri, Fikirleri ve Maturidilik Mezhebi*, Ankara: Kitabiyat, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> P. Bruckmayr, "The Spread and Persistence of Mâturîdî Kalâm and Underlying Dynamics" (2009); K. Lewinstein, "Notes on Eastern Hanafite Heresiography" (1994), W. Madelung, "The Spread of Mâturîdism and the Turks" (1968), "The Westward Migration of Hanafî Scholars From Central Asia in the 11th to 13th Centuries" (2002), U. Rudolph, "Das Entstehen der Mâturîdiyya" (1997), W. M. Watt, "The Problem of al-Maturidi" (1974), Z. Ş. Yunusoviç, "Ebû Mansûr El-Mâturîdî'ye Nispet Edilen Eserlerin Taşkent Yazmaları" [The Tashkent Manuscripts of Works Related to Abû Manşûr al-Mâturîdî and Some Studies of al-Mâturîdî], trans. from Uzbek by Sönmez Kutlu and Yulduz Musahanov and included in Kutlu's *İmam Mâturîdî ve Maturidilik* edited volume.

<sup>17</sup> Ashirbek Muminov and Anke von Kügelgen, "Mâturîdî Döneminde Semerkand İlahiyatçıları", *İmam Mâturîdî ve Maturidilik*, ed. Kutlu, pp. 279–91.

of an ancient Ḥanafī intellectual centre in Samarqand (known as the Juzjāniyya) known for its theological rationalism and its conflict with the theological circles in the city associated with the *ahl al-ḥadīth*. Ahmet Ak's historical study "The Emergence of Māturīdism", presented in 2009 and published in 2012,<sup>18</sup> incorporated this manuscript evidence into the fullest picture yet described of al-Māturīdī's life and historical background.<sup>19</sup> Ak's study of al-Māturīdī's life and work (most recent edition published in 2017) remains the most up-to-date treatment of al-Māturīdī's historical background and biography.<sup>20</sup>

Recent edited volumes have made yet more scholarly studies on the history of Māturīdism available in Turkish. These include numerous studies authored by Central Asian scholars<sup>21</sup> and included in the proceedings of the International Symposium on Māturīdism (Past, Present, and Future) held in Kazakhstan in 2015, and key translated works by international scholars such as Marie Bernand, Angelika Brodersen, Mustafa Cerić, Richard Frank, Daniel Gimaret, Manfred Götz, J. Meric Pessagno, Joseph Schacht, and Josef van Ess.<sup>22</sup> One recent collection focuses specifically on scholarship related to *Tā'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*.<sup>23</sup> Finally, it is important to mention that Ulrich Rudolph's highly important monograph on al-Māturīdī (*Al-Maturidi und die Sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand*, 1996) has been translated into Turkish.<sup>24</sup> In sum, the historical study of al-Māturīdī

<sup>18</sup> Ahmet Ak, "Māturīdīliğin Ortaya Çıkışı", *Büyük Türk Bilgini İmām Māturīdī ve Māturīdilik. Milletlerarası Tartışmalı İlmi Toplantı (22–24 Mayıs 2009, İstanbul)*, ed. İlyas Çelebi, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2012, pp. 435–51.

<sup>19</sup> The main conclusions of von Kügelgen, Muminov, and Ak's important studies are summarised in English in the introductory section of Philip Dorroll, "The Universe in Flux. Reconsidering Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī's Metaphysics and Epistemology", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 27/2 (2016), pp. 119–35.

<sup>20</sup> Ahmet Ak, *Büyük Türk Âlimi Māturīdī ve Māturīdilik*, İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> *International Symposium on Maturidism (Past, Present, and Future). Papers*, ed. Sönmez Kutlu, Ankara: Ahmet Yesevi Üniversitesi, 2018. It should be noted here that a significant literature on Māturīdism has recently developed in Central Asian languages. This material is unfortunately linguistically inaccessible to the editors, but deserves significant attention in its own right. Numerous important articles in these languages can be found in the edited collection above, edited by Kutlu and published by Ahmet Yesevi University.

<sup>22</sup> Included in the massive collection of texts related to Māturīdī and Māturīdism, *Din Felsefesi Açısından Māturīdī Gelenek-i*, ed. Recep Alpyağıl, İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2016: M. Bernand, "La critique de la notion de nature (Ṭab') par le Kalām (1980); A. Brodersen, "Divine and Human Acts in Māturīdī Kalām" (2014); selection from M. Cerić, *Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islam. A Study of the Theology of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī*; R. Frank's review of the Kholeif edition of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (1976); selection from D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain en théologie musulmane* (1980); "M. Götz, "Māturīdī und sein Kitāb Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān" (1965), J. M. Pessagno, "Intellect and Religious Assent: the View of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī" (1979), "The Uses of Evil in Maturidian Thought" (1984); J. Schacht, "New Sources for the History of Muhammadan Theology" (1953), J. van Ess' review of the Kholeif edition of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (1988).

<sup>23</sup> Hatice K. Arpağuş, Mehmet Ümit, and Bilal Kır (eds.), *İmām Māturīdī ve Te'wīlātū'l-Kur'ān*, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Ulrich Rudolph, *Semerkant'ta Ehl-i Sünnet Kelamı. Māturīdī*, trans. Özcan Taşçı, İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2016.

and Mâturîdism in contemporary Turkey incorporates the near entirety of global scholarly output on this topic, while at the same time contributing decisive advancements of its own.

### Critical Editions and Translations

The second area of decisive contributions made by the Turkish renaissance in Mâturîdî studies is the production of critical editions of al-Mâturîdî's extant works. This monumental effort was led by the great Turkish theologian and scholar Bekir Topaloğlu (1932–2016), whose extraordinary depth of theological thought, scholarship, and mentorship is widely remembered and celebrated in Turkey. Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi produced the most recent and meticulous critical edition of al-Mâturîdî's *Kitâb al-Tawhîd* in 2003,<sup>25</sup> and Topaloğlu led the production of the most recent and comprehensive critical edition of the entirety of al-Mâturîdî's massive Qur'an commentary, *Tâ'wîlât al-Qur'ân*.<sup>26</sup> Topaloğlu also produced a brilliantly lucid explanatory translation of *Kitâb al-Tawhîd* into Turkish in 2002,<sup>27</sup> and initiated and led the Turkish translation of *Tâ'wîlât al-Qur'ân* (some 9,000 pages in 18 volumes).<sup>28</sup> It is difficult to overstate the importance of these editions and translations, which have provided Turkish scholars and readers with unparalleled access to al-Mâturîdî's theology.

Scholars in Turkey have also produced critical editions and translations of important works from the Mâturîdî school. These include: Topaloğlu's edition and translation of Nûr al-Dîn al-Şâbûnî's (d. 580/1184) *al-Bidāya fî uşûl al-dîn* (1978);<sup>29</sup> Ahmet Saim Kılavuz's edition and translation of Abû Salama al-Samarqandî's (c. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century) *Jumal uşûl al-dîn* (1989);<sup>30</sup> M. Sait Özervarlı's edition of 'Alâ' al-Dîn al-Usmândî's (d. 552/1157) *Lubâb al-kalâm* (2005);<sup>31</sup> Mustafa Sinanoğlu's edition of Abû Muḥammad al-Samarqandî's (d. 701/1301) *al-'Aqîda al-rukniyya* (2008);<sup>32</sup> Hülya Alper's translation of Abû al-Mu'în al-

<sup>25</sup> Abû Manşûr al-Mâturîdî, *Kitâb al-Tawhîd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi, Ankara: İSAM, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Abû Manşûr al-Mâturîdî, *Tâ'wîlât al-Qur'ân*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu et al., Istanbul: Mizan Yayınevi, 2005–2011, 17 vols.

<sup>27</sup> Ebû Mansûr el-Mâturîdî, *Kitâbü't-Tevhîd. Açıklamalı Tercüme*, trans. Bekir Topaloğlu, Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2002.

<sup>28</sup> Ebû Mansûr el-Mâturîdî, *Tevîlâtü'l Kur'ân Tercümesi*, trans. Bekir Topaloğlu et al., Istanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2019, 18 vols.

<sup>29</sup> Nûreddin es-Sâbûnî, *Mâtürîdîyye Akaidi*, ed. and trans. Bekir Topaloğlu, Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1978.

<sup>30</sup> Ebû Seleme es-Semerkindî, *Ebû Seleme Es-Semerkindî ve Akâid Risâlesi*, ed. and trans. Ahmet Saim Kılavuz, Istanbul: Emek Matbaacılık, 1989.

<sup>31</sup> 'Alâ' al-Dîn al-Usmândî, *Lubâb al-kalâm*, ed. M. Sait Özervarlı, Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Abû Muḥammad al-Samarqandî, *al-'Aqîda al-rukniyya*, ed. Mustafa Sinanoğlu, Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2008.



Nasafî's (d. 508/1115) *Kitâb al-Tamhîd fî qawā'id al-tawhîd* (2010);<sup>33</sup> Ömür Türkmen's edition of Abû Shukr al-Sâlimî's (d. after 460/1068) *al-Tamhîd fî bayân al-tawhîd* (2017),<sup>34</sup> and Muhammed Aruçî's edition of Nûr al-Dîn al-Şâbüni's *al-Kifāya fî l-hidāya* (2019).<sup>35</sup>

### Systematic Theological Contributions

Of the three types of contributions produced by the Turkish renaissance in Mâturîdî studies, by far the most numerous have been books and articles engaged in constructive theological projects and theological analysis based on Mâturîdî texts. These run into the many dozens, if not hundreds, of individual works. In order to give a sense of the insights offered by this vast literature, it is helpful to delineate two main methods of Turkish theological study of al-Mâturîdî. I term these the 'constructive' and the 'analytical' methods. The first term denotes theological projects that explicitly utilise al-Mâturîdî's theology to engage contemporary moral questions. These projects identify areas of potential theological development in al-Mâturîdî's work, and then build creative theological arguments on the foundation of Mâturîdî concepts. The second method seeks to refine our precise understanding of al-Mâturîdî's theology in order to more accurately situate it within the broader Sunni theological tradition, rather than to utilise al-Mâturîdî's concepts as a way to engage contemporary moral issues. It is important to note that these two methods are most often not mutually exclusive in contemporary Turkish scholarship, and are found in various degrees in almost all contemporary Turkish studies of al-Mâturîdî.

The two contemporary Turkish theologians and scholars of al-Mâturîdî, Sönmez Kutlu and Hülya Alper, for instance, epitomise these two methods or tendencies. Kutlu's work has been dedicated to developing the theological rationalism inherent in al-Mâturîdî's work in ways that contribute to the protection of both individual liberty and communal identity in contemporary Turkey. The central insight in Kutlu's vast body of theological work is that al-Mâturîdî's understanding of human freedom and religious belief can be developed to foster a genuinely Islamic understanding of both individual human rights and the moral need to actualise our individual freedom in a given historical community, such as the past and present historical tradition of Turkish Islam. For Kutlu, al-Mâturîdî's theology of human freedom and human rationality have the potential

<sup>33</sup> Ebû'l-Muîn en-Nesefî, *Tevhîdîn Esasları. Kitâbü't-temhîd li kavâ'idî't-tevhîd*, trans. Hülya Alper, İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Abû Shukr al-Sâlimî, *al-Tamhîd fî bayân al-tawhîd*, ed. Ömür Türkmen, İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Nûr al-Dîn al-Şâbüni, *al-Kifāya fî l-hidāya*, ed. Muhammed Aruçî, İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2019.

to dignify and advance the Islamic moral obligation to establish individual liberty and social justice in this life, in obedience to God's ethical commands.<sup>36</sup>

Alper's work also focuses on al-Mâtûrîdî's theological understanding of human reason, but argues that al-Mâtûrîdî's specific analysis of human reason provides its best insights through its connection with divine revelation and divine wisdom, which of necessity transcend the historical particularity of modernity. Alper's work reveals the dialectic relationship between reason and revelation, epitomised in her highly insightful phrase, 'the priority of reason and the necessity of revelation' (*aklın önceliği ve vahyin gerekliliği*).<sup>37</sup> Alper thus uses al-Mâtûrîdî's work to sharpen the analysis of key theological dynamics in Sunni tradition, such as the relationship between human reason and divine revelation. According to Alper's reading of al-Mâtûrîdî, human reason is given by God to allow human beings to freely approach God's truth in revelation, which is then both legitimised intellectually by human reason while at the same time transforming human reason in its encounter with the ultimate truths of its Creator.

Finally, it is important to note that in recent years, important thematic studies of key features and issues in al-Mâtûrîdî's work have proliferated in Turkish. These studies represent a stage of even further refinement in the modern Turkish analysis and advancement of Mâtûrîdî theology. Though far too numerous to list here in their entirety, some notable examples can be mentioned here in order to give a sense of the range of this current scholarship. These include Musa Koçar's *The Relationship between God and the World in Mâtûrîdî* (2004);<sup>38</sup> Emine Ögük's *The Relationship between Wisdom and Evil in Mâtûrîdî's System of Thought* (2010);<sup>39</sup> Sami Şekeroğlu's *Morality in Mâtûrîdî* (2010);<sup>40</sup> Harun Işık's *Human Freedom in Mâtûrîdî* (2013);<sup>41</sup> Kılıç Aslan Mavil's *Scriptural Hermeneutics in Mâtûrîdî Theology* (2017);<sup>42</sup> Hülya Terzioğlu's *The Perception of*

<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, his highly influential article, "Bilinen ve Bilinmeyen Yönleriyle İmam Mâtûrîdî", *İmam Mâtûrîdî ve Maturidilik. Tarihi Arka Plan, Hayatı, Eserleri, Fikirleri ve Maturidilik Mezhebi*, ed. Sönmez Kutlu, Ankara: Kitabiyat, 2003, pp. 23–64; and his recent reflections on the state of Mâtûrîdî studies in Turkey, "Türkiye'de Yapılan Mâtûrîdî ve Maturidilik Araştırmaları Sorunları", *Mâtûrîdî Araştırmaları. Sorunlar ve Öneriler*, ed. Recep Tuzcu et al., İstanbul: Endülüs Yayınları, 2018, pp. 12–26.

<sup>37</sup> Hülya Alper, *İmam Mâtûrîdî'de Akıl-Vahiy İlişkisi*, İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2008, p. 157. On her reflections on method in the study of Mâtûrîdî, see her introduction to her edited volume in honour of the memory of Bekir Topaloğlu, *İmam Mâtûrîdî ve Mâtûrîdiyye Geleneği. Tarih, Yöntem, Doktrin*, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2018, pp. 7–9.

<sup>38</sup> Musa Koçar, *Mâtûrîdî'de Allah-Alem İlişkisi*, İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Emine Ögük, *Mâtûrîdî'nin Düşünce Sisteminde Şer-Hikmet İlişkisi*, Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Sami Şekeroğlu, *Mâtûrîdî'de Ahlak. Felsefî bir Betimleme*, Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Harun Işık, *Matûrîdî'de İnsan Özgürlüğü*, Ankara: Araştırma Yayınları, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Kılıç Aslan Mavil, *Mâtûrîdî Kelâmında Tevil*, İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2017.

*Women in Mâtürîdî* (2018);<sup>43</sup> and Osman Nuri Demir's *The Conception of the Human Being in Mâtürîdî* (2020).<sup>44</sup>

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## Introducing the Volume

LEJLA DEMIRI

The present volume is, to the best of our knowledge, the first Reader of Māturīdī theology ever produced in a Western language. The choice of presenting and explicating the rich and vibrant traditions of the Māturīdī school comes at a time of propitious scholastic growth and interest in Islamic theology. The present volume has thus been structured to mirror this variety and historical importance and is divided into five parts, each mirroring classical compendia of *kalām*. As such, the careful selection and presentation of the hitherto untranslated works offer an exciting moment for the field of theology both within and outside Islamic discourses.

Part One is dedicated to **Epistemology and Ontology** and opens with Hureyre Kam's contribution with a selection from Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī's (d. 333/944) *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* ('The Book of Unity'). The passages selected here characterise al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge, the very foundation upon which his systematic theology is built. Carefully analysing the two epistemological frameworks promoted by al-Māturīdī, while at the same time bringing to our attention the divergent readings of these challenging texts, Kam proposes a novel way of interpreting al-Māturīdī's methodology, which he identifies as 'the dual epistemology'. The first represents religious knowledge, while the other is intended for knowledge in general, each having a distinct frame of reference.

The second chapter, by Mürteza Bedir, includes passages from two different works, *Jumal uṣūl al-dīn* and *Sharḥ Jumal uṣūl al-dīn* authored in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century by two otherwise unknown scholars: Abū Salama Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī and Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Bushāghirī, respectively. Both works were written in a setting close to that of al-Māturīdī himself and therefore serve as first-hand source information about his thought and theology as perceived by his immediate circle of disciples and followers. The two excerpts included here from the *Jumal* and its commentary deal with the relationship between divine revelation and human reason. Discussing the epistemological value of reason *vis-à-vis* religious knowledge, both sources aim to prove that in reality there can never be a real clash between reason and revelation, for ultimately both reason and revelation are proofs of God, and as such there is no room for inconsistency.

This is followed by a chapter by Sümeyye Parıldar who presents an excerpt from *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-dhihnī* ('Treatise on Mental Existence') authored by Ismail Gelenbevi (d. 1205/1791), a prominent 18<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman scholar. The selected text reflects post-Avicennan philosophical discussions on mental existence combined with theological discourses on divine knowledge, its universality, and all-comprehensive nature. Acknowledging the obvious difficulties of Gelenbevi's text, with her informative introduction and analysis, Parıldar facilitates the reading by contextualising it within the larger framework of *falsafa* and *kalām*.

Part Two of the volume explores the Māturīdī school's discourse on **Meta-physics**, primarily dealing with the divine essence, attributes and actions. It opens with a chapter by Angelika Brodersen, which offers a selection from a certain Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī's *al-Tamhīd fī bayān al-tawḥīd* ('Introduction in the Explication of the Unity') stemming from 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>-century Transoxiana. The excerpt discusses a variety of arguments related to divine attributes, in support of the Māturīdī (as well as the Ash'arī) position of affirming the reality of God's attributes, in contrast to the Mu'tazilīs. Aiming to prove that 'the attribute is neither God nor other than Him', al-Sālimī argues that the denial of the attributes would lead to the denial of the 'attributed', and to regard the divine essence as completely identical with His attributes would lead to the conclusion that all attributes are identical to each other. This is followed by a discussion on the attributes of divine action, which he considers to be a single eternal attribute. This is presented as an important feature that differentiates Māturīdī theology from that of al-Ash'arī who regards the attributes of action (understood as individual acts) to be related to the divine attribute of power and as such created.

This is followed by Lejla Demiri's chapter on Rukn al-Dīn 'Ubayd Allāh al-Samarqandī's (d. 701/1301) *al-'Aqīda al-rukniyya fī sharḥ lā ilāha ill Allāh Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh* ('Rukn al-Dīn's 'Aqīda: A Commentary on the *Shahāda*'). Another Māturīdī scholar of Samarqandī provenance, and almost unknown today, his theology merges *kalām* with *taṣawwuf*. He quotes from both Ash'arī and Māturīdī sources, blending them with those of sufis. The excerpt here is a good summary of his theology which Demiri calls 'the theology of humility', as it is founded on the axiom of the unknowability of God: 'No one knows God other than God'. Hence, human knowledge of God comes from Him. Likewise, heavenly bliss is due to God's mercy and favour, and not from human beings earning their way to Heaven by acts of worship and righteous deeds. For, al-Samarqandī emphatically writes, 'complete thankfulness for the outward and inward blessings of God is not possible, because every instance of thanks for a new blessing requires further thanks unendingly. A blessing from God, even if it be small, cannot be praised without incurring new blessings'. The divine attributes of mercy, generosity and beauty feature frequently in al-Samarqandī's *'Aqīda*, as can be observed in the excerpts presented in this volume, demonstrating the extent of his merging *kalām* and *taṣawwuf*.

Part Three of this volume, dealing with **Prophethood**, comprises two chapters. The first, by Hülya Alper, introduces a very prominent Māturīdī scholar, Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) and his *al-Tamhīd li-qawāʿid al-tawhīd* ('Introduction to the Principles of the Unity'), a book which summarises the doctrine of the Māturīdiyya. In the excerpts translated and analysed here, Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, known for his systematisation of Māturīdī *kalām*, aims to prove why prophethood is necessary, providing a number of rational arguments, and finally presenting miracles as proofs for the truthfulness of prophethood. Prophethood in itself is regarded as a tool of instruction and a means of attaining wisdom and perfection, a true favour of the Wise and All-Knowing God, thanks to His compassion and mercy towards His servants. Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī believes that since the intellect is able to know good and evil universally, though not in individual instances, and since wisdom consists of knowing individual instances, there is an inevitable need for divine guidance through prophets who will make a necessary statement on each individual instance, i. e. deliver the divine law. And even though the necessity of being grateful to the giver of a blessing is embedded in the intellect, the divine law is needed to explain how to appreciate the value of blessings and to know suitable ways to show one's gratitude, concludes al-Nasafī. He then continues to elaborate the ways by which miracles are evidence for prophethood. The second text on prophethood is presented by Harith Ramli in his chapter on another Central Asian Māturīdī scholar who settled in Damascus, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Khabbāzī (d. 691/1292) and his work *al-Hādī fī uṣūl al-dīn* ('Guide to the Principles of Religion'). The excerpt here reflects al-Khabbāzī's effort in proving the need for prophethood. As Ramli clearly demonstrates in his introduction, al-Khabbāzī follows the classical Māturīdī position that the sending of prophets is due to divine wisdom. In al-Khabbāzī's views, 'humans are by design predisposed to receiving wisdom and knowledge, and are ready to accept more when instructed by a wise teacher'. For, 'the sending of messengers to promise, warn, and to demonstrate to people what they require for their benefit in both worlds, is an act of wisdom'. Yet al-Khabbāzī takes a step further in his elucidations, as Ramli points out, 'reflecting a need to address not only older opponents (i. e. Muʿtazilites and the Barāhima, representing Indic traditions in Central Asia such as Buddhism), but also new challenges in the Ashʿarī-dominated milieu of Ayyubid Damascus'.

Part Four is dedicated to discussions on **Faith, Knowledge and Acts**, and includes three chapters. Kayhan Özaykal's chapter looks at al-Māturīdī's commentary on the Qurʾān, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* ('Interpretations of the Quran'). The selected passages here cover al-Māturīdī's take on the Qurʾānic story of Adam's creation and the dialogue between the Creator and the angels on this occasion (Q 2:30–32). Al-Māturīdī places emphasis on the importance of knowledge and God being the ultimate bestower of true knowledge: 'Thus, God showed them this to have them know that the path to recognising and knowing things is not



(based on) natural qualities, but rather the kindness and grace of God'. In this short text which reveals al-Māturīdī's anthropology, he seems to be in line with the position that regards this Qur'anic narrative as an indication of 'the high status and honour of humankind and the greatness of the knowledge granted to them'. The Qur'anic verse which relates the angels' response 'Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except that which You have taught us. Indeed, you are the Knower, the Wise' (Q 2:32) leads al-Māturīdī to discuss one of the earliest theological themes, the relation between faith and deeds, and ultimately the fate of a believer who has committed a major sin. The passages here exhibit, as Özaykal points out, 'al-Māturīdī's wish to achieve the most reasonable and balanced theological position in relation to the metaphysics of human action'. This is followed by Dale J. Correa's chapter on *Uṣūl al-dīn* ('Roots of Religion') of Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1100), an illustrious post-formative period Māturīdī scholar from Bukhārā. The selected texts deal with the role of the intellect in reference to faith. In his description of the intellect (*aql*) as the tool (*āla*) for attaining knowledge of things, al-Bazdawī regards the intellect's seat to be the brain, while its effect is in the heart: it is through the light of the intellect that the heart perceives things. Al-Bazdawī then discusses whether the intellect on its own is sufficient to attain knowledge of God. After evaluating in detail varying views and scholarly positions, al-Bazdawī quite surprisingly comes to the conclusion that the intellect does not necessitate faith. In other words, human beings are not responsible for having knowledge of God before the arrival of the Messengers. Then comes Najah Nadi's chapter on Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd ibn 'Umar al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390) and his most original and latest theological work *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* ('Commentary on the Objectives'). A prominent scholar within both Māturīdī and Ash'arī theological circles, al-Taftāzānī's works have attracted global Muslim interest throughout the centuries, and yet his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* has received little attention. As argued by Nadi, the originality of al-Taftāzānī's thought, 'is best seen in his concern with critical verification of knowledge (*taḥqīq*), spurning *madhhab*-affiliations', and the excerpt in this volume is presented as an example of his method of *taḥqīq*. The selected passages discuss the nature of *īmān*, bringing into dialogue al-Taftāzānī's epistemology, ontology and metaphysics. The passage provides a thorough discussion of the three statements al-Taftāzānī mentions in the opening of the excerpt: 'Firstly, *īmān* is the action of the heart, not merely the action of the tongue. Secondly, it is assent (*taṣḍīq*), not merely knowledge (*ma'rifa*) or belief (*i'tiqād*). Thirdly, actions are not intrinsic to it [i. e. *īmān*] such that, were they to be absent, it would not be negated'.

Part Five on **Free Will, Predestination and the Problem of Evil** opens with a chapter by Racha el Omari presenting a sample from Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī/al-Ka'bī's (d. 319/931) *Uyūn al-masā'il wa-l-jawābāt*, the only Mu'tazilī text included in this volume. To better understand al-Māturīdī's theological world, and especially his views regarding human acts and divine justice, one has to

closely examine his discussions with the Mu'tazilites and especially with his contemporary al-Ka'bī, a prominent Mu'tazilī theologian, who often features in the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. The selected passages here demonstrate al-Ka'bī's defence of his belief that God must do the absolute best (*aṣḥaḥ*) for His servants, a Mu'tazilī view that al-Māturīdī and his followers vehemently rejected.

This is followed by Philip Dorroll's presentation of select passages from al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* reflecting his views concerning human acts. As clearly expressed in the excerpt, according to al-Māturīdī's theology, creation owes its existence to divine omnipotence, wisdom, pre-existent knowledge, and will, as he writes, 'the entirety of His creation fluctuates within His gifts and His goodness'. God has made human beings 'capable of knowing and distinguishing the praiseworthy from the blameworthy. He has made the blameworthy distasteful, and what is praiseworthy pleasing, to their intellects'. Human beings are further obliged to obedience in accordance with the divine command. Therefore, al-Māturīdī concludes, the Book of God 'is truth from God', and 'whoever adheres to it prospers and is saved, while whoever turns away from it is miserable and fails'.

What follows is Philipp Bruckmayr's introduction to 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī al-Maḥbūbī al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346) and his *al-Tawḍīḥ fī ḥall ghawāmiḍ al-Tanqīḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh* ('The Clarification for Solving the Difficulties in *The Revision in Legal Theory*'). Although this is a work in legal theory, the passages included here explore the nature of good and evil, a theme that is relevant to both *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. The excerpt, as Bruckmayr observes, 'is of particular relevance because it represents the first sophisticated Māturīdī engagement with the paradigm-shifting contributions of the Ash'arī luminary Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) to the sciences of *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*'. In his discussion of good and evil, Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī also reflects on its theological relevance to human free will and divine predestination. He particularly rejects the Ash'arī view that good and evil can only be known through revelation and not through reason. He further aims to demonstrate the inconsistencies of the Ash'arī position, particularly challenging al-Rāzī's argument.

The volume then concludes with a contribution by Tim Winter who provides the full text, translation and analysis of *Risāla fī bayān al-ḥikma li-'adam nisbat al-sharr ilayhi ta'ālā* ('A Treatise Expounding the Wisdom in Not Attributing Evil to God the Exalted'), an outstanding theological treatise by the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman Sheykhulislam Ibn Kamāl or Kemalpaşazāde (d. 940/1534). The text focuses on the question of evil, exploring the difference between evil and goodness and the way they are attributed to God in scriptural texts. In Winter's words, Ibn Kamāl's 'central argument is transcendentalist and aporetic: God's *ḥikma* controls a universe of perfection (*itqān*), evident in the transcendent world (*malakūt*) but which to those who inhabit the human material plane (*mulk*) is only imperfectly perceived'. In addition to scriptural texts, the work also quotes

from Persian poetry and takes its inspiration from Ibn 'Arabī's cosmology and metaphysics. As Winter aptly observes, Ibn Kamāl's text 'presents the complex maturity of Ottoman metaphysics: by this period not only have the later Māturīdī and Ash'arī schools been brought into a nuanced conversation, but the very different ontology of Ibn 'Arabī has been seriously integrated as well'.

With its cross-regional character exploring the fecundity of theological ideas throughout the centuries, the present volume offers a glimpse into the richness of the Māturīdī tradition. Each text included in this volume comes with a short introduction to the author, the work and the theme discussed in the selected passages, followed by the Arabic original, and an annotated translation in English offered by each contributor. All chapters include passages from published editions of the original material in Arabic (without the critical apparatus) except for the second chapter (by Bedir) which is based on manuscripts. Instead of simply reproducing the existing editions, we have introduced punctuation and vocalisation wherever needed and have re-structured sentences and paragraphs to facilitate the reading of these intricate texts. Typos or misreadings are tacitly corrected unless there is a difference of reading, in which case these are indicated in footnotes. Overall, the volume is intended to contribute to our knowledge of Māturīdī theology and promote further research in the field. It will be particularly useful for scholars and students of Islamic Studies, history of the Middle East and Arabic language and philology.

## Part I: Epistemology and Ontology



## Dual Epistemology

Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*

HUREYRE KAM

It is well-known that al-Māturīdī, in his epistemological framework, draws on three sources in his search for knowledge. These are: a) sense perception (*ʿiyān/ḥawāss*), b) testimony/reports (*samʿ/akhbār*), and c) reason (*ʿaql/naẓar*). We learn this from his introduction to the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* ('The Book of Unity'), where he lays out his epistemological system, which functions as a programmatic framework for his arguments and the theological system put forward in his book. This relatively short passage of approximately ten pages presented several difficulties to the editors of the original manuscript, such that we have two diverging readings of this chapter in the two editions of Fathalla Kholeif<sup>1</sup> and Bekir Topaloğlu – Muhammed Aruçi.<sup>2</sup> The difficulties in reading and understanding this short chapter understandably arose from the fact that al-Māturīdī seems to take two distinct approaches to epistemology at the same time. After rejecting *taqlīd* at the outset, he then goes on to clarify which sources of knowledge are best suited to know the *true religion*, which are only two: *al-samʿ* and *al-ʿaql*. After he discusses and defends his position in a very brief manner, he again asks the question of which sources to consult to gain knowledge in general, and now presents the reader with three different sources: *al-ʿiyān*, *al-akhbār* and *al-naẓar*. This has led to much confusion among researchers attempting to describe al-Māturīdī's approach to epistemology.

While the majority of scholars hold the opinion that al-Māturīdī presents only one epistemology for all questions, and they therefore interpret the differences in his terminology for the different sources – *ʿiyān/ḥawāss*, *samʿ/akhbār*, *ʿaql/naẓar* – as synonyms, I disagree. I hold the position that the usage of differing terminologies refers to two distinct epistemological frameworks, in which he dif-

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<sup>1</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Fathollah Kholeif, Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi, Istanbul/Beirut: Irshād/Dār Şādir, 2001. For an in-depth discussion of the differences between the two editions with a special focus on the introduction, see Hureyre Kam, *Das Böse als Gottesbeweis Die Theodizee al-Māturīdīs im Lichte seiner Epistemologie, Kosmologie und Ontologie*, Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2019, pp. 38–50.

ferentiates between the means to gain knowledge of the *true religion* (first part of his introduction: two sources of knowledge) and the ways to gain knowledge in general and in other scholarly disciplines (second part of his introduction: three sources). I call this twofold approach of his ‘The dual epistemology’.<sup>3</sup> Following this new classification – which resulted from my observation that it is absurd that al-Mâtûrîdî would ask the question of knowledge two times successively and answer differently both times – al-Mâtûrîdî reserves a standalone epistemological framework for the quest of the true religion and excludes sensory perception as a source for this kind of knowledge. This was necessary for him because, according to traditional Sunni belief, there can be no prophet after the Prophet Muḥammad, and prophets come with a proof of their prophecy, namely miracles and wonders. Since miracles can only be perceived and recognised through sense perception, he felt it necessary to deal with the questions of religion in a framework different from that of scientific knowledge.

The problem that arises from this differentiation is, however, that the only readily available source of knowledge that delivers *necessary knowledge* (*‘ilm darûrî*) – meaning, knowledge that is irrefutable and beyond any doubt – is *al-‘yân* (sense perception). Since this source is excluded from the ‘religious epistemology’<sup>4</sup> it would mean that there cannot be an indisputable knowledge of God.<sup>5</sup> The following translation of the introduction of the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* is to be read with this system of dual epistemology in mind. The chapter headings in the following excerpts of the original Arabic text of the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* are structured according to my concept of his dual epistemology.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For further elaboration, see Kam, *Das Böse*, pp. 21–81.

<sup>4</sup> One could also name it *fiqh* in its original sense, meaning deep understanding of religion.

<sup>5</sup> This makes it crucial for his system that he finds ways to strengthen the quality of knowledge through *sam’/khabar*. For a study on his approach to testimony, see Dale J. Correa, ‘The Vehicle of Tawātur in al-Mâtûrîdî’s Epistemology’, *Büyük Türk Bilgini İmâm Mâtûrîdî ve Mâtûrîdîlik. Milletlerarası Tartışmalı İlmi Toplantı (22–24 Mayıs 2009, İstanbul)*, ed. İlyas Çelebi, İstanbul: IFAV, 2012, pp. 375–89.

<sup>6</sup> The Arabic original is from the Topaloğlu-Aruçi Edition (TA), pp. 65–72. There are some omitted passages, marked with [...], to keep the focus on the main arguments. The content of the omitted text is summarised in footnotes in the translation section. Words between curly brackets in the Arabic indicate scribal additions to the text, while square brackets denote redactions by the editors.

[Selected text begins on the following page]



### [وُجُوبُ مَعْرِفَةِ الدِّينِ بِالدَّلِيلِ]

{قَالَ الشَّيْخُ أَبُو مَنْصُورٍ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ:} أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّا وَجَدْنَا النَّاسَ مُخْتَلِفِي الْمَذَاهِبِ فِي النَّحْلِ، فِي الدِّينِ، مُتَّفَقِينَ عَلَى اخْتِلَافِهِمْ فِي الدِّينِ عَلَى كَلِمَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ: أَنَّ الَّذِي هُوَ عَلَيْهِ حَقٌّ وَالَّذِي عَلَيْهِ غَيْرُهُ بَاطِلٌ؛ عَلَى اتِّفَاقِ جَمَلَتِهِمْ فِي أَنَّ كَلًّا مِنْهُمْ لَهُ سَلَفٌ يُقَلَّدُ. فَثَبَّتَ أَنَّ التَّقْلِيدَ لَيْسَ مِمَّا يُعَذَّرُ صَاحِبُهُ لِإِصَابَةِ مِثْلِهِ ضِدَّهُ. عَلَى أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ فِيهِ سِوَى كَثْرَةِ الْعَدَدِ؛ اللَّهُمَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ لِأَحَدٍ مِمَّنْ يَنْتَهِي الْقَوْلُ إِلَيْهِ حُجَّةٌ عَقْلِيَّةٌ يُعَلِّمُ [بِهَا] صِدْقَهُ فِيْمَا يَدَّعِي، وَبِرَهَانٍ يُفْهَمُ الْمُنْصَفِينَ عَلَى إِصَابَتِهِ الْحَقِّ. فَمَنْ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجَعُهُ فِي الدِّينِ بِمَا يُوْجِبُ تَحْقِيقَهُ عَنْهُ فَهُوَ الْمَحَقُّ؛ وَعَلَى كُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ مَعْرِفَةُ الْحَقِّ فِيْمَا يَدِينُ هُوَ بِهِ، كَأَنَّ الَّذِي دَانَ بِهِ هُوَ مَعَ أَدَلَّةِ صِدْقِهِ وَشَهَادَةِ الْحَقِّ لَهُ قَدْ حَصَرَهُمْ، إِذْ مَنَّتْ حُجُجُ كُلِّ مِنْهُمْ مَا يَضْطَرُّ الْعُقُولَ إِلَى التَّسْلِيمِ لَهُ لَوْ ظَفَرَ بِهَا؛ وَقَدْ ظَهَرَتْ لِمَنْ ذَكَرْتُ. وَلَا يَجُوزُ ظُهُورُ مِثْلِهَا لَضِدِّهِ فِي الدِّينِ، لِمَا تَنَاقَضَ حُجُجُ الْعَقْلِ بَعْدَ مَا غَلَبَتْ حُجُجُهُ وَأَظْهَرَ تَمَوُّيَهُ أَسْبَابَ الشُّبْهِ فِي غَيْرِهِ. وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ.

### [القسم الأول: مدارك العلم الدينيّة<sup>7</sup>]

#### [كون السمع والعقل أصليين يُعرَف بهما الدين]

ثُمَّ أَصْلُ مَا يُعْرَفُ بِهِ الدِّينُ - إِذْ لَا بَدَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِهَذَا الْخَلْقِ دِينٌ يُلْزِمُهُمُ الْاجْتِمَاعُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْلُ يُلْزِمُهُمُ الْفَرْعُ إِلَيْهِ - وَجْهَانِ؛ أَحَدُهُمَا السَّمْعُ، وَالْآخَرُ الْعَقْلُ.

<sup>7</sup> This heading is due to my observation of the twofold epistemological approach, which has been discussed above and is not part of the printed editions of the *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*.

The necessity of knowing religion through proof (*dalīl*):

{The Master Abū Maṣṣūr, may God show him mercy, said:} Now, indeed we find people divided into different denominations in their faiths and religions, in agreement of their dissents regarding religion on one point: that they are right and the others are wrong. They are all in agreement that they are following [the authority of] their predecessors. Therefore, it is clear that unquestioned following (*taqlīd*) does not prevent the opinion holder from reaching the opposite [opinion] in the same manner.<sup>8</sup> There is not much to it other than the multiplicity in numbers [of followers]. Nay, except that there is a rational proof for the one with authority through which the truthfulness of his claim can be known, and demonstrative evidence which would force the fair ones [to acknowledge] that he has reached the truth. He who relies on this authority in religion, which requires a thorough investigation, has reached the truth. So every one of them is obliged to know the truth in the realms of the religion that he [i. e. the prophet] is on. The religion in which he believes, with the proofs for his righteousness and the truth testifying for him, encompasses them [every other religion], because the ultimate goal of the proofs of all of them is to force reason into submitting to [the truth of their claims] if they can achieve [a sustainable proof]; but [those clear proofs] have been shown by the one whom we mentioned [i. e. the prophet]. And it is not possible that similarly [indisputable] proofs are brought up by someone who is in opposition to [the prophet] in religion. Because [in this case] the proofs of reason would fall into contradiction after his proofs [had already] unveiled the doubtfulness [in the statements] of the others. There is no might and no power except by God the Almighty.

[First Part: Religious Epistemology]<sup>9</sup>

[Testimony (*samʿ*) and reason (*ʿaql*) are the two sources with which the religion is known]

There can be no doubt that the human race needs a religion in which they can join together and principles upon which they can rely. The sources with which to gain knowledge of the [true] religion are two: One is testimony and the other is reason.

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<sup>8</sup> That is by following an opposing authority.

<sup>9</sup> As mentioned above, this heading is not part of the original Arabic text.

أما السمع فمما لا يخلو بشر من انتحاله مذهباً يعتمد عليه ويدعو غيره إليه، حتى شاركهم في ذلك أصحاب الشكوك والتجاهل فضلاً عن الذي يُقرّ بوجود الأشياء وتحققها، على ذلك جرت سياسة ملوك الأرض من سيرة كلّ منهم [على] ما راموا تسوية أمورهم عليه وتأليف ما بين قلوب رعيتهم به؛ وكذلك أمر الذين ادّعوا الرسالة والحكمة، ومن قام بتدبير أنواع الصناعة. وبالله المعونة والنجاة.

وأما العقل فهو أن كون هذا العالم للفناء خاصّة ليس بحكمة، وخروج كلّ ذي عقل بفعله عن طريق الحكمة قبيح عنه؛ فلا يحتمل أن يكون العالم الذي العقل منه جزءاً مؤسساً على غير الحكمة أو مجعولاً عبثاً. وإذا ثبت ذلك دلّ أن إنشاء العالم للبقاء لا للفناء. ثمّ كان العالم بأصله مبنياً على طبائع مختلفة ووجوه متضادة، وبخاصّة الذي هو مقصود من حيث العقل الذي يجمع بين المجتمع ويفرق بين الذي حقّه التفريق؛ وهو الذي سمّته الحكماء "العالم الصغير". فهو على أهواء مختلفة وطبائع متشتتة، وشهوات رُكبت فيهم غالبية، لو تركوا وما عليه جُبلوا لتنازعوا في تجاذب المنافع وأنواع العزّ والشرف والمُلك والسلطان، فيعقب ذلك التباغض ثمّ التقاتل، وفي ذلك التفاني والفساد الذي لو تعلّق أمر كون العالم له لبطلت الحكمة في كونه. مع ما جعل البشر وجميع الحيوان غير محتمل للبقاء إلا بالأغذية وما به قوام أبدانهم إلى المُدّد التي جعلت لهم. فلو لم يُردّ بتكوينهم سوى فنائهم لم يحتمل إنشاء ما به بقاؤهم. وإذا ثبت ذا لا بدّ من أصل يؤلّف بينهم ويكفّهم عن التنازع والتباين الذي لديه الهلاك والفناء.

As for testimony, it is (a source of knowledge) which nobody can neglect as a basis of their faith and which they invite others to [acknowledge]. On this even the sceptics<sup>10</sup> and agnostics agree, let alone those who accept the existence and reality of things. [Furthermore] the policy of all the kings on the earth relies on this [source] in their approach to settle their affairs and to unite the hearts of their subjects. The same applies to those who claim messengership and wisdom, as well as to those who manage diverse crafts and handiworks. Support and salvation are from God.

And as for reason, there would be no wisdom had this world been created only to perish. Likewise, it is reprehensible for an intelligent being to do something that lacks wisdom.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it is not possible that the world, of which reason is a part, is not based on wisdom or that it is made in vain. This proves that the world is created to persist, not to perish. Moreover, in its foundation, the world consists of different natures and opposing aspects. This accounts especially for that which is intended by reason<sup>12</sup> – which brings together that which belongs in composition and divides those which are meant to be divided<sup>13</sup> – and this is what the philosophers named the microcosm [i. e. the human]. For they have different inclinations, diverse natures and desires dominant over them. If they were to be left to their nature, they would inevitably come into conflict in an effort to obtain different benefits such as honour, prestige, wealth, and rule. This conflict would then lead to hating one another and fighting against one another, in which lie mutual destruction and corruption. If the creation of the world was based on this purpose, it would be devoid of wisdom. In addition to this, people and all living beings in general can only survive with food and that with which they preserve their bodies until their fixed term [comes to an end]. So if only their ultimate destruction were intended with their creation, there would be no sense in creating those things with which they ensure the continuation of their existence. So since this is now established, undoubtedly there must be a principle that would unite them and restrain them from conflict and difference that lead to doom and decay.

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<sup>10</sup> Topaloğlu translates it as 'sophists' in Turkish: Ebû Mansûr el-Mâtürîdî, *Kitâbü't-Tevhîd Tercümesi*, trans. Bekir Topaloğlu, Ankara: ISAM, 2005, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> In other words, departing from the path of wisdom by means of one's own actions is repugnant to anyone who possesses sound reason.

<sup>12</sup> Meaning that which is intended to be recognised and acknowledged by reason.

<sup>13</sup> He is highlighting the role and tasks of reasoning here, which is to analyse the object of interest into its parts and synthesise again in order to gain insight. The reference to the microcosm of the philosophers gives us a hint about the role of '*aq̣l*' in al-Mâtürîdî's view. In taking the 'microcosm' as a template, the '*aq̣l*' can gain insight to universal concepts and metaphysical truths. But since the quality of the knowledge gained through reason is always in the mode of *muḳtasab*, this knowledge cannot claim to be factual, but rather represents speculative insights into the realms of metaphysical truths.

فلزم طلب أصل يجمعهم عليه لغاية ما احتَمَل وُسْعُهُم الوقوف عليه. [...]

[القسم الثاني: مدارك العلم عامّة]<sup>14</sup>

[أسباب المعرفة]<sup>15</sup>

{قال أبو منصور رحمه الله:} ثمّ اختُلِف في الأسباب التي بها يُعَلَم المصالح والحقّ والمحاسن من أصدادها. فمنهم من يقول: ما يقع في قلب كلّ منهم حُسْنه لزمه التمسكّ به. ومنهم من يقول: يعجز البشر عن الإحاطة بالسبب، ولكن يتمسكّ بما ألهم، لما يكون ذلك ممّن له تدبير العالم.

{قال الشيخ رحمه الله:} وهما بعيدان من أن يكونا من أسباب المعرفة، لأنّ وجوه التضادّ والتناقض في الأدیان يبيّن، ثمّ عند كلّ واحد منهم أنّه المحقّق. ومحال أن يكون سبب الحقّ يعمل هذا العمل [...]. ولم يكن لواحد منهما دليل غير الذي لآخر في خطابه؛ وذلك نوعٌ ما لا يدفع الاختلاف والتضادّ اللّذين بهما التفاني. [...]

{قال الشيخ أبو منصور رحمه الله:} ثمّ السبيل التي يُوصَل بها إلى العلم بحقائق الأشياء العيان والأخبار والنظر.

<sup>14</sup> This heading is due to my observation of the twofold epistemological approach, which has been discussed above and is not part of the printed editions of the *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*.

<sup>15</sup> This heading is from TA (p.69). I left out the first heading *al-muqaddima* at the same place in TA. I did not include it because I consider it misleading at this place. If the *muqaddima* or introduction begins at this point, what about the former sections regarding the rejection of *taqlīd* etc.; are they to be considered outside the text? I assume TA were not able to find another solution to categorise the text, because they did not see the dual epistemological approach put forward in the text.

Therefore, it is necessary to look for a principle that unites them as far as they are able to devote themselves to it. [...]

[Second Part: General Epistemology]<sup>16</sup>

[The sources of knowledge]

{Abū Maṣṣūr, may God show him mercy, said:} Furthermore, there is dispute regarding the ways to differentiate the useful, the true, and the good from their counterparts. There are some who say: Good is that which appears in one's heart as such and which necessitates that they stick to it. And there are some who say: It is beyond the powers of human beings to discern all the reasons for things. Therefore, one has to stick to that which he receives as inspiration, because it comes from the one who manages the universe.

{The Master, may God show him mercy, said:} And these two are far from being sources of knowledge. Because it is evident that there are oppositions and contradictions between the religions, while every one of them believes that they are right. And it is impossible that a true source would lead to something like this, confusing falsehood with truth. [...] And none of them<sup>17</sup> has a proof [for their statement] other than the one which has already been delivered by the other [i. e. the opposing party] in his speech. This is the kind of dispute which is not capable of resolving differences and contradictions, thus bringing with it their mutual destruction.<sup>18</sup> [...]

{The Master Abū Maṣṣūr, may God show him mercy, said:} The sources with which to gain knowledge of the reality of things are the perception of the senses (*ʿiḡān*), reports (*akhbār*),<sup>19</sup> and reasoning (*naẓar*)<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> As mentioned above, this heading is not part of the original Arabic text.

<sup>17</sup> That is the parties relying on inspiration as a source.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Māturīdī is trying here to find a solid basis for the means of a productive dialogue between opposing parties of religions. In the following sentences he also disqualifies the 'method of draws', as in drawing lots and determining the winner of the argument by the length of the straws. Furthermore, he disqualifies the consultation of seers and oracles. Note that oracles and prophets are not synonymous in the view of al-Māturīdī, because oracles depend on inspiration and visions, whereas prophets function as receivers and deliverers of messages from God.

<sup>19</sup> Note that he used the term *al-sam'* to refer to 'testimony' in his religious epistemology. According to Josef van Ess the Qur'an, Sunna and Consensus function as authoritative sources and are subsumed under the term *sam'*. See Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997, vol. 4, p. 660. This leads to the understanding that the term *al-akhbār* is wider in its scope and is not restricted to the authoritative sources of religion.

<sup>20</sup> Note that he used the term *al-aql* to refer to 'reason' in his religious epistemology.

## أ-[العيان]

فالعيان ما يقع عليه الحواسّ، وهو الأصل الذي لديه العلم الذي لا ضدّ له من الجهل.  
[...]

## ب-[الأخبار]

{قال الشيخ رحمه الله:} والأخبار نوعان؛ من أنكر جملة لَحَقَّ بالفريق الأوّل، لأنّه أنكر إنكاره، إذ إنكاره خبرٌ، فيصير منكرًا عند إنكاره إنكاره. [...]

[A. Sense Perception (*ʿiyān*)]

The *ʿiyān* indicates that which is perceived by the senses (*ḥawāss*).<sup>21</sup> It is the principle source that delivers the kind of knowledge to which there is no contrary other than ignorance. [...] <sup>22</sup>

[B. Reports (*al-akhbār*)]

{The Master, may God show him mercy, said:} There are two classes of reports.<sup>23</sup> He who denies them in principle joins the first group,<sup>24</sup> for he is also denying his own denial, because his denial is nothing but a report, so that he becomes a denier of his own denial. [...] <sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Hanifi Özcan points out that according to other passages in al-Māturidī's exegetical work the term *al-ʿiyān* is wider in its scope than *al-ḥawāss*, because it also includes inner senses like instincts. See Özcan, *Māturidī'de Bilgi Problemi*, Istanbul: IFAV, 2012, p. 75.

<sup>22</sup> In the following, al-Māturidī uses the rhetorical example that if one were to cut off body parts of those who neglect the senses as a source of knowledge, these deniers would of necessity accept the validity of sensory knowledge due to the undeniable fact of physical pain. Thus, it is unmistakable that the senses are a source of necessary knowledge (*ʿilm al-darūrī*).

<sup>23</sup> In a later passage he goes on to classify the reports according to the science of Hadith, namely by distinguishing collective (*al-khabar al-mutawātir*) and single reports (*al-khabar al-wāḥid*). Collective reports are more trustworthy than single reports, which have to be treated with caution. Although the inclusion of reports into his epistemological framework is necessary to legitimise the belief in prophets, the knowledge itself gained from reports is not to be seen as *necessary*, but *muktasab* (acquired). The quality of the knowledge is subordinated to the quality of the knowledge gained from sense perception, although sense perception cannot teach us anything about God or the true religion.

<sup>24</sup> Here al-Māturidī refers to those who neglect sense perception as a source, meaning they both have to be confronted with their denial and the absurdity of their claims.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Māturidī goes on to defend *khabar* as a legitimate source of knowledge by stating that it gives us all the knowledge that we need to survive. This is because information about other people and foreign places, as well as practical knowledge about living, is not etched into our sensory perception or reason. This is the reason why we have to accept the *akhbār* on prophets. Yet, in order to accept someone's prophecy, he has to come with proofs (miracles) to back up the legitimacy of his messages. Furthermore, although his elaboration on the necessity of *akhbār* aims to validate the messages received from prophets, we can also see that he does not limit *akhbār* to prophetic epiphanies. On the one hand he classifies 'the reports' according to hadith methods, but on the other, this concept includes also reports in the sense of 'news'. Therefore, it has to be considered as a distinct source, rather than the very strict understanding of *al-samʿ*.



## ج- [النظر]

ثم الأصل في لزوم القول بعلم النظر وجوه. أحدها: الاضطرار إليه في علم الحسن والخبر، وذلك فيما يبعد من الحواس أو يُلطّف، وفيما يرد من الخبر أنّه في نوع ما يحتمل الغلط أو لا، ثم آيات الرسل وتمويهات السحرة وغيرهم في التمييز بينها، وفي تعرّف الآيات بما يُتأمل فيها [من] قوى البشر وأحوال الآتي بها، ليظهر الحقّ بنوره والباطل بظلمته. [...]

[C. Reasoning (*al-naẓar*)]<sup>26</sup>

There are several aspects to the argument for knowledge through reason. One of them is the necessity of [analysing the knowledge delivered by] sense perception and testimonies/reports. This is the case for the senses, when [they seek to know something, which is] out of reach for them, or too subtle [to be perceived by the senses]. And this is the case for what is transmitted by testimonies and reports, in that it seeks [to determine] if there is falsehood [in its information] or not, and further to differentiate between the miracles of the messengers and the deceptions of the sorcerers and the like. And [it is needed] for recognising the verses/miracles (*al-āyāt*)<sup>27</sup> by reflecting on human capabilities and the conditions of those who bring the (verses/miracles), so that the truth appears in its full glory and the falsehood in its darkness.

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<sup>26</sup> In the case of al-Māturīdī *naẓar* (speculation) is not to be confused with *istidlāl* (inference), as performed by scholars. The *naẓar* is also not to be degraded to a mere function of the '*aql*' in al-Māturīdī's epistemology, although it might appear as such. Instead, it is a distinct source of knowledge cooperating with '*aql*'. While '*aql*' functions as a tool of abstraction and seeks to grasp transcendent truths, *naẓar* is a tool for analysing the information given to us by the senses and testimonies/reports. The *istidlāl* is a tool of communication between different sources, which are distinct, but not isolated from each other. For further elaboration, see Kam, *Das Böse*, pp. 65–72.

<sup>27</sup> This term can mean 'signs' from the natural world as well as the specific verses of the Qur'an. As is so often the case with al-Māturīdī, it seems possible that he is deliberately referring to both senses of the term at once.

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## Reason and Revelation

Abū Salama Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī  
(c. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century), *Jumal uṣūl al-dīn* and Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā  
al-Bushāghirī (c. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century), *Sharḥ Jumal uṣūl al-dīn*<sup>1</sup>

MÜRTEZA BEDİR

The following two works, an epistle and its commentary, are both works written close to the milieu within which Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī lived and worked. Although we have in our hands today some of the works of al-Māturīdī himself, there are only a few extant sources that allow us to evaluate and contextualise his views and immediate world. One of the earliest sources is *Jumal uṣūl al-dīn* by a certain Abū Salama Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (c. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century), a younger contemporary of al-Māturīdī. The commentator, Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Bushāghirī (c. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century), about whom we know little, seems to have lived immediately after al-Māturīdī's generation. Hence, this work reflects the immediate reception of views associated with al-Māturīdī and his environment during the late fourth/tenth century, about which we have scant knowledge. Given the fact that al-Bushāghirī, the author of the commentary below, lived among the close circle of al-Māturīdī, this commentary is able to provide almost contemporary information about the ideas associated with the latter and his followers.

The following two excerpts from the epistle and its commentary are about a perennial problem faced by monotheistic religions in general, and Islamic theology and legal theory in particular. This is the problem of the tension

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Şükrü Özen who in a private conversation on 11 April 2020, shared with me his unpublished research on the identification of the author of *Sharḥ Jumal uṣūl al-dīn*. According to him, the author is Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Bushāghirī, the author of *Kashf al-ghawāmiḍ fī aḥwāl al-anbiyā'*. This latter work did not reach us but rather an abridgment of it, titled *al-Muntaqā* by Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Şābūnī (d. 580/1184). Al-Bushāghirī, who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century, was wrongly identified by Ismā'īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī as someone who lived in the 9<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century, see Ismā'īl Bāshā al-Bābānī al-Baghdādī, *İdārah al-maknūn fī l-dhayl 'alā Kashf al-zunūn*, ed. Şerefettin Yaltkaya and Kilisli Rifat Bilge, Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1971, vol. 2, p. 363. *Al-Muntaqā* was published; see Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Şābūnī, *al-Muntaqā min 'işmat al-anbiyā'*, ed. Mehmet Bulut, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Istanbul: Nashriyyat Rī'āsat al-Shu'ūn al-Dīniyya, 2019.

between revelation and human reasoning. Islamic legal theory discussed two sub-problems with respect to this. One is the question of whether or not there are original values to things and actions, independent of God's revelation. The second one is that of what the theoretical framework is of revealed laws *vis-à-vis* human reasoning.

The first question was answered in four different ways. One answer is that things are in principle permitted unless prohibitory evidence arrives. The second view is its opposite, that things are originally prohibited unless the permissive evidence arrives. The third view is that there is nothing original associated with things, hence there is no verdict; the evaluative nature shall be determined by evidence from God. The fourth view is the view of al-Māturīdī, who seems to have downplayed the significance of this controversy due to the fact that – since the first ever human being is a prophet – there is no need to search for the original evaluation of the things and acts. After all, the evaluations of the things from the first human being onward were taught by God Almighty. The values in this world, therefore, all came from God's communication to human beings through His chosen messengers. In other words, all the values in this world were in fact learned from God's messengers.

The second question required a theoretical framework within which the relationship of the human intellect with the revealed laws has been placed. The earliest attempt to formulate such a framework was undertaken by the Ḥanafīs (in particular al-Māturīdī and his Samarqandī associates), the Mu'tazila, as well as some of the early Shāfi'ī jurists, all of whom argued that the human intellect is able to grasp some truths independently of the revelation. Unlike in the previous issue, where it is assumed that all the values known by humanity are taught by God's communication, here the scholars presumed a state in which the human intellect stands alone, stripped of all the values extrinsic to it. The question is: What can the intellect in this state know about values? According to al-Māturīdī, his Samarqandī followers, the Mu'tazila and the fourth century Baghdadi Ḥanafīs and some Shāfi'īs of the same century, the human intellect alone can grasp the truths or essences of some things, and hence the values associated with them. They classified 'things/acts' in this respect into three types. The first type is those acts whose evaluation is accepted by the human intellect as necessarily obligatory. The second type is those that necessarily entail the prohibition of the things/acts. These two were regarded as conclusive rational realities, in that even revealed law could not overrule them. The third one is that of contingent things/acts – that is, the acts whose values can be obligatory, prohibited or permitted depending on the circumstances, hence they are contingent in terms of values.

In relation to the second problem, the authors also discuss the epistemological value of reason as far as religious knowledge is concerned. They believed that there is no real clash between reason and revelation simply due to the fact that both reason and revelation are proofs of God, and thus they are not assumed to

be inconsistent or incongruent. It is here in this respect that the above tripartite division of the values correspond to the tripartite division of knowledge. Necessary rational knowledge produces necessary obligations, impossible knowledge produces necessary prohibitions, and finally, contingent knowledge relates to contingent values. While revelation plays the major role in the latter realm, in the former two realms reason and revelation are congruent.

Abū Salama Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *Jumal uṣūl al-dīn*:<sup>2</sup>

نُورُ الاعتقاد في الجملة أنّها على ثلاثة أقسام: واجب في العقل وممكن وممتنع. فالواجب نحو معرفة المنعم والشكر له؛ والممتنع نحو الجهل بالنعم والكفر به؛ والممكن نحو مقادير شرائع الدين كمقدار الصلوات والزكاة. ثمّ الممكن لما لم يكن في العقل كفاية في صرّف الممكن إلى الواجب أو إلى الممتنع ألجأت الحاجة إلى رسولٍ عن مَنْ يَعْلَمُ حقائق الأشياء ليبيّن ذلك ويصرّفه إلى حقٍّ من الواجب والممتنع. ثمّ معلوم أنّ الرُّسل إذا جاءت بالبراهين النّبوية والآيات المعجزة التي دلّت على صدقهم وعصمتهم [جاؤوا] بتأكيد ما في العقل إيجابه وتحقيق نفي ما في العقل امتناعه وبيان ما في العقل إمكانه. لأنّ حُجَجَ الله لا تتناقض؛ وقد قال الله تعالى: ﴿وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Şehit Ali Paşa 1648, fol. 2a.

<sup>3</sup> سورة النساء ٨٢/٤.

The light of belief in general has three divisions: rationally necessary, (rationally) impossible and (rationally) contingent. The necessary is, for example, knowledge of the Benefactor and gratefulness to Him. The impossible is, for example, ignorance of the Benefactor and ungratefulness to Him. The contingent is, for example, the specific measures of the religious rules, such as (deciding) the number of prayers and the amounts of alms-giving. Since reason is not able to transform the contingent into the necessary or into the impossible, there emerges an obliging need for a messenger (sent) by the One who knows the truths of things in order to explain this and turn him to the truth about what the necessary and the impossible is. It is well known that when the messengers come with splendid proofs and miraculous signs that illustrate their truthfulness and infallibility, they confirm what is rationally necessary, verify the negation of what is rationally impossible, and explain what is rationally contingent. For the proofs of God do not contradict each other, as God the Exalted said: 'If it had been from other than God, they would have found therein much incongruity' [Q 4:82].



Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Bushāghirī, *Sharḥ Jumal uṣūl al-dīn*:<sup>4</sup>

قوله: "نور الاعتقاد في الجملة أنها على ثلاثة أقسام"

[...]

[أفعال العباد، منها ما هو] معصية، ومنها ما هو غفلة، ومنها ما هو عبادة. فلا بدّ من معرفة هذه الأشياء والأعمال ومعرفة بتعريف الله جلّ وعزّ. وتعريفه إمّا بوحى ينطق فيُعرّف به، أو بعقل يُدرك به إلزام الله عليه. فما عُرف بالعقل والسمع بُدئ لموافقته أن كان حظراً أو إباحةً. وما توقّف العقل فيه فهو منتظر لورود السمع؛ فإن ورد السمع فقد خرج العقل عن توقّفه فوافق السمع. ولهذا نقول بأنّ العلم أفضل من العقل، لأنّ العلم حاجة والعقل آلة؛ والآلة جعلت لأجل الحاجة لا الحاجة لأجل الآلة. وإن كان العلم لا يقوم للعبد إلّا بالعقل كالصلاة لا يقوم للعبد إلّا بالطهارة، لكنهما إذا حصلتا كان الصلاة أفضل من الطهارة.

وتكلّموا في مسألة الحظر والإباحة. فبعضهم قالوا بأنّ الأشياء كلّها على الإباحة حتّى يقوم دليل الحظر. وقال بعضهم: هي على الحظر حتّى يقوم دليل الإباحة. وقال بعضهم: هذا في الممكنات، فأما في موجبات العقل وممتنعاته فلا يحتاج إلى هذا التقسيم والتفصيل. وقال الشيخ أبو منصور رحمه الله بأنّ الخوض في هذه المسألة خطأ، لأنّ الاستبداد بنفسه كان يلزم أن لو خلا زمانٌ عن رسولٍ، فلما لم يخل للمخاطبين وقتٌ عن رسولٍ لم يفتقر إلى القول بأحد هذه الأفاويل، لأنّه كان يجب الفرع إلى رسولٍ كلّ وقتٍ حتّى كان يُخبرهم عن المحظور وعن المباح. ألا ترى أنّ أوّل هذا الخلق كان رسولاً، فما معنى اشتغالنا بهذا التفصيل؟ وإذا انطمست آثارُ رسولٍ جاء إلى الناس رسولٌ آخر.

<sup>4</sup> MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Şehit Ali Paşa 1648, fols. 18a-21a.

**His statement: 'The light of belief in general has three divisions'**

[...]

[Human deeds, some are acts of] disobedience; some heedlessness; and some others worship. Surely it is necessary to know these things and these deeds, which can only be known through communication from God Almighty. His communication is either by the revelation he [i. e. the messenger] conveys through which these things can be known; or it [i. e. God's communication] is by reason through which God's obligation on him [i. e. the human being] is recognised. It begins with what is known by both reason and revelation for they concur on either prohibition or permission. The thing on which reason suspends judgment is subject to the arrival of revelation. When the revelation arrives, reason ends its suspension of judgment and concurs with what revelation brings. It is because of this that we consider knowledge to be superior to intellect. For knowledge is a need, while intellect is an instrument. The instrument exists for the sake of the need; the need does not exist for the sake of the instrument. A servant cannot obtain knowledge without intellect, just as the prayer cannot be established without purity. However, when they both exist, the prayer is superior to purity.

They [i. e. the scholars] conversed about the issue of prohibition and permission. Some of them said: Things are in principle permitted, unless there is an indication of prohibition. Others said: They are [in principle] prohibited, unless there is an indication of permission. Some others said: This issue has to do with contingent things; as to the necessary and the impossible things, there is no need for this classification and division. The master Abū Maṣṣūr, may God have mercy upon him, said that delving into this issue is an error, as one's independent thinking would have required that there be a time devoid of a messenger. Since for human beings there has been no period devoid of a messenger, there is no need to adopt one of these opinions. At all times humans have been obliged to seek aid from a messenger who will inform them of the prohibited and the permitted. Consider that after all, the first ever human being was a messenger! What is the meaning of engaging in this matter? When no trace of the messenger remained, the next messenger came to (guide) people.

قال الشيخ الإمام رضي الله عنه: وسمعتُ الفقيه عبد الصمد بن أحمد الأربنجي يحكي عن الشيخ أبي منصور أنه قال: إن العلماء في هذه الأمة لإبانة الأحكام ومعالم الدين كالأنبياء المتقدمين. وكما كان إذا انقضى رسولٌ ونُفيت الأحكام وليس فيهم رسولٌ آخر ولم يبقَ لهم بهادٍ ومُعَلِّمٌ جاءهم رسولٌ آخر، كذلك في هذه الأمة إذا انقضى الفقهاء والأئمة في كلِّ عصرٍ أوجبت الضرورة ظهورَ قرنٍ آخر أو قيامَ الساعة، لأنَّه لا يجوز أن يترك الله تعالى عباده سُدى لا هاديَ لهم ولا مُبَيِّنٍ للأحكام. وحكي هذه الحكاية يوم تُوِّفِي الشيخ أبو بكر العياضي رحمه الله.

### وقوله "واجب في العقل"

أي ساقط في العقل ثابت فيه، لأنَّ الوجوب في اللغة هو السقوط؛ يقال: "وجبت الشمس"، و"وجب الطائر". فإذا وجب شكرُ المنعم في العقل ورَسَخَ فيه ولازمه دلٌّ أنَّه هو المندوب إليه والمرغوب فيه، إلَّا أنَّ الرُّسل حيث جاؤوا بالواجب<sup>5</sup> في العقل إنَّما جاؤوا لمعنيين: لتأكيد ما في العقل إيجابه فيزول عن تضاعيفه شوائبُ الشكِّ، والثاني لإلزام الحجة بما في موجب العقل حتَّى لا يمكنه الإعراضُ عنه، وكذلك في الممتنع. فأما في الممكن فلمعرفة كَيْفِيَّةِ الممكن ومقداره ووقته ومعناه. لأنَّنا إن لم نجعل وجوب المعرفة للمنعم والشُّكرَ له مُضْمَّنًا في العقل موجباً فيه أدلَّى مُنْكَرٍ في أقطار الأرض الذي لم يبلغه الدعوة بالعدل، ولا عذر للقاصي والداني ولمن يبلغه الدعوة أو لم تبلغه لسلامة العقل الذي أعطاه الله ورَكَّبَه فيه ليتأمَّل الواجب فيه والممتنع فيه، فلم يُعَذَّر بِإِضَاعَتِهِ فَأُخْلِدَ في النار وعُذِّب. ولا كذلك الممكن، لأنَّ من لم يبلغه دعوة السمع فهو معذور كالكاfer يؤمن في دار الكفر وليس هناك مُخْبِرٌ عن الممكنات ولا له سبيلٌ إلى العلم بها حتَّى مات لم يؤاخذ بها. وأما المقيم في دار الإسلام فهو غير معذور بالجهل في الشرائع، لأنَّ له سبيلاً إلى العلم بها.

<sup>5</sup> في الأصل: في الواجب.

The great master, the imam – may God be pleased with him – said: I heard the jurist ‘Abd al-Šamad ibn Aḥmad al-Arbanjī who related from the master Abū Maṣṣūr that he said: With respect to explaining the rules and the principles of religion, the scholars of this community are in the status of the ancient prophets [i. e. those of the previous communities]. Just as when a messenger died the rules were forgotten and there was no guide, or teacher among them, there came another messenger. Similarly, in this community when the jurists and the masters die out in each generation, necessity entails the emergence of another generation or the coming of the Last Hour. For it is impermissible to suppose that God the Sublime would leave His servants aimless, that is, without a guide and explainer of the rules. This story was related on the day the master Abū Bakr al-‘Iyāḏī, may God have mercy on him, died.<sup>6</sup>

### His statement: ‘Rationally necessary’

This means ‘what has fallen to reason and what is established in it’, for *al-wujūb* linguistically means falling; for example, Arabs say ‘*wajabat al-shams* (the sun fell)’ and ‘*wajabat al-ṭā’ir* (the bird fell)’. When gratefulness to the Benefactor falls to reason, is firmly established in it and clings to it, this indicates that it is recommendable and desirable. However, when the messengers brought what is fallen to or engrained in reason they only did so for two reasons: (First) to confirm what is obligatory to reason so that its contents are cleared of the impurities of doubts. The second one is to furnish proofs in support of what is necessitated by the reason so that it becomes impossible] to turn a blind eye to it. The same is true for the impossible. As to the contingent, it [i. e. the revelation] comes to provide information about the way the contingent is to be conducted, its amount, its time and its implication. This is because if we do not assume that the obligation of knowing the Benefactor and thanking Him are embedded in reason and entailed by it, then any unbeliever in whatever part of the earth, whom the call of the messengers may or may not reach, could allege an excuse. No excuse is acceptable, neither from the distant one nor from the near one, due to soundness of the reason given and fixed in him by God, so that he should reflect upon the necessary and the impossible. No one shall be excused of wasting his reason, which may lead to his staying in Hell and punishment forever. The contingent is different, as the one whom the call of revelation does not reach is excused [from fulfilling it], just as an unbeliever who becomes a believer<sup>7</sup> in a non-Muslim territory. Since there is no one to notify him of the contingent [duties] and no other way to know them, he [then] continues as such until he dies, [and] he will not be charged with [failing to fulfil] these [duties]. However, the one living in the abode of Islam is not excused for ignorance of the laws of God, due to the fact that he has a means of knowing them.

<sup>6</sup> At the end of this work, the author gives the stories of Abū Bakr al-‘Iyāḏī, his brother and his father.

<sup>7</sup> i. e. converts to Islam.

وقوله: ”ثم لما لم يكن في العقل كفاية“

يعني بالكفاية لمعرفة كفيّة الممكن ومقاديره وأوقاته. فأما قبول الممكن<sup>8</sup> مع تمثّله في العقل كفاية، لأنّ العقل في الجملة يقبل العبادة والطاعة وما به النجاة في الدنيا والآخرة، وله الحذر من المعاصي والمضارّ وإن لم يكن له التمييز بين المنافع والمضارّ والطاعات والمعاصي التي تمكّنت في السمع والخبر، فإذا العقل قابلٌ لكلّ ممكّنٍ منتظرٍ لورود البيان. فإن ورد البيان وافقه العقل، لأنّه لم يكن فيه ردّه. وبالله التوفيق.

وقوله ”عن من يعلم حقائق الأشياء“

فالعالم بحقائق الأشياء بكلّيّتها هو الله تعالى، وليس كما قالت الفلاسفة إنّ الفلسفة معرفة الأشياء بكلّيّتها بحقائقها، لأنّ هذه ربوبيّة، وليس للمخلوق حظٌّ في الربوبيّة.

وقوله: ”بالبراهين النيرة“

قال الشيخ أبو منصور: البراهين والمعجزات ليست لإثبات رسالة الرُّسل، لأنّ رسالة الرُّسل بالإرسال فقط، لكن الآيات والبراهين لإلزام الحجّة على الجاحدين، ثمّ المعجزة هي التي أعجزت سائر الخلق عن الإتيان بمثلها.

وقوله: ”النيرة“

ما استنار في القلوب [ل]من لهم الحذاقة في أضداد الآيات كسحرة فرعون لما كانت لهم حذاقة في معرفة السحر واستنار لهم آية الرسالة لموسى صلوات الله عليه علّموا أن لا شوب في الآية من السحر فأمنوا وصدّقوا، وإذا لم يكن لفرعون علمٌ في معرفة السحر لم يميّز بين الآيات النيرة والسحر المظلم، فقال: ﴿إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السَّحْرَ﴾<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> في الأصل: القبول الممكن.

<sup>9</sup> سورة الشعراء ٤٩/٢٦.

**His statement: 'Since reason is not able to'**

That is (reason is not) able to grasp fully the qualities of the contingent, or its amounts and times. Despite the fact that reason vacillates, it is in principle an adequate means of recognising the contingent in general. For in general reason itself is capable of accepting worship, obedience and anything through which salvation is achieved in this world and the hereafter; it is able to beware of sins and harms, even though it cannot discern those benefits from harms, or obedience from disobedience which are established by the authority of revelation and tradition. So since reason is amenable to every contingent that expects an explanation [i. e. revelation], then when that explanation occurs the reason agrees with it, for there is nothing to object to. Success is from God!

**His statement: 'By the One who knows the truths of things'**

The one who knows the truths of things in their totality is God the Sublime alone. The claim of the philosophers that philosophy is the science of knowing the complete truths of the things is wrong, as this implies divine lordship, whereas the created being has no share in divine lordship.

**His statement: 'With splendid proofs'**

The Master Abū Maṣṣūr said: The proofs and miracles are not to prove the divine mission of the messengers, for the divine mission of the messengers is [instituted] only by being sent (by God). On the contrary, the miracles and proofs are to impose the proof on the deniers; then the miracle is that which incapacitates other humans to produce the like.

**His statement: 'Splendid'**

That which is illuminated in the hearts of those who are skilled in [recognising] the opposites of the signs, such as the magicians of the Pharaoh, who, due to their expertise in the magical craft, and since they were enlightened with the sign of the divine mission of Moses – peace be upon him – they understood that there is no mingling of magic in his proof, and hence believed and confirmed [him]. Since Pharaoh had no knowledge of magical craft he could not discern the splendid signs from the dark magic. And therefore he said: 'Lo! He doubtless is your chief who taught you magic!' [Q 26:49].

وقوله: "لَأَنَّ حُجَجَ اللَّهِ لَا تَتَنَاقُضُ"

إذ المحتج فيما يُناقض في حجته من له أمران: قصور في علمه أو جهل بعواقب الأشياء، أو عجز وضعف في معناه، فتتناقض حججه ربما. فأما الله عز وجل فلا قصور في علمه ولا ضعف في ربوبيته ولا خفاء عليه بعواقب الأشياء، فلا تتناقض حججه. ومعنى الحجة هو الإلزام، وفي العقل هذا الإلزام كما في السمع، وكلاهما حجتان على العبد لمعرفة إلزام الله عليه فلا تتناقضان.

وقوله: "﴿وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾"<sup>10</sup>

يعني القرآن لو كان من عند غير الله لكان يتمكّن فيه الاختلاف الكثير، فإذا علمتم القرآن ولا اختلاف فيه لزمكم أن تقرّوا بأنه من عند الله. فإن قيل: نرى فيه الاختلاف في بعض الآيات يوجب حكماً، وبعضها ينفي ذلك الحكم بعينه، ونرى فيه متشابهاً ومحكماً ومفسراً معمولاً به ومجماً موقوفاً على ورود بيانه. قيل: بأن الموجب لا يُناقض النافي ولا النافي يناقض الموجب، بل كل واحد منهما في وقته. فإذا وجب في بعض الآيات ثم انتفى في آية أخرى فليس له حكم المناقضة ولا فيه اختلاف، بل إنهاؤه الموجب وإتمامه وابتداء المنتفى وبيانه. ولهذا نقول بأن النسخ بيان مُنتهى وقت ما أراد الله بالأمر الأول.

**His statement: ‘The proofs of God do not contradict each other’**

It is because a disputant whose proofs contradict each other is the one who has two traits: [1] the lack of knowledge or unawareness of the consequences of events, or [2] incompetence and weakness in nature, which would then lead to the contradiction of the proofs. However, God Almighty has no lack in knowledge, nor is He weak in His Lordship; neither are the consequences of events concealed from Him. Therefore His proofs do not contradict each other. The proof means an imposition; and this imposition is present in reason as well as in revelation. Both are proofs] imposing on a human being the obligation to know God. Therefore the two [i. e. reason and revelation] cannot contradict each other.

**His statement: ‘If it had been from other than God, they would have found therein much incongruity’ [Q 4:82]**

That is, if it had been from other than God, there would have been the possibility of much incongruity. If you know the Qur’an, and that there is no contradiction in it, it is imperative on you to admit that it is from God. If it is claimed: We see in it inconsistencies in that while one verse is approving a ruling, another one is negating the same rule. Similarly, we see the ambiguous, the unequivocal, the construed that is to be implemented, and the concise that is dependent on the arrival of the explication. The response is as follows: The approving does not necessarily contradict the negating, nor does the negating contradict the approving. On the contrary, each one is valid for its period of time. When [a judgment] is approved in one verse, then it is negated in another verse, and this is not to be regarded as contradiction or antinomy, but is to be construed as a termination and completion of the approved and a beginning of the negating and its explication. This is why we say that ‘abrogation is the articulation of the expiry date of the previous injunction of God’.



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## Mental and Extra-Mental Existence

Ismail Gelenbevi (d. 1205/1791), *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-dhihnī*

SÜMEYYE PARILDAR

Ismail Gelenbevi (Ismāʿīl ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Maḥmūd Gelenbevi) (d. 1205/1791), born in the village of Gelenbe (today in Manisa, Turkey), was a prominent scholar of the eighteenth century. He wrote on a large variety of topics ranging from logic and mathematics to theology. Important scholars and historians, such as Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (d. 1312/1895) in his *Tarih-i Cevdet* and Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (d. 1371/1952), provide us with his biography and present him as a leading figure in logic, theoretical and Islamic sciences as well as in engineering and mathematics. This can be seen in Gelenbevi's voluminous books, *Hāshiya 'alā sharḥ al-Jalāl 'alā l-'Aḍudiyya* (which is a gloss on Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī's [d. 908/1502] commentary on Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's [d.756/1355] *'Aqā'id*) and *Sharḥ 'alā l-Tahdhīb* (which is a gloss on Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Mīrī's *Tahdhīb*).

Avicenna talks about the processes of cognition through levels of abstraction and he defines knowledge as the acquisition of form in the mind.<sup>1</sup> Thus, he draws a distinction between actualised things in the real world and their status as being an object of knowledge. This allows later philosophers to talk about two realms, the mental and the extra-mental. To give an example, the fire that gives off light in its environment and can burn inflammables is extra-mental, while the perceived fire is mental.

The question of mental existence is one of the most interesting developments of post-Avicennan philosophical and theological discussions. The problem in its formulation is mainly about the ontological status of the products of knowledge. The problem combines previous theological literature on knowledge with Avicennan metaphysics. Specific discussions on mental existence do not occur before Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), though the structure of these discussions can also be traced back to Avicenna's (d. 428/1037) separation of existence and quiddity. Avicenna established that the knowledge process occurs by the acquisition of form in the mind and at the higher levels of abstraction, where

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<sup>1</sup> Avicenna, *al-Shifā' al-Ṭabī'iyāt. Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic text). Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifā'*, ed. Fazlur Rahman, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, II.2, pp. 58–61.

the quiddity of the thing is acquired. The definition and nature of knowledge in the peripatetic framework requires some notion of existence different from extra-mental existence. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī becomes the first person to discuss the implications of such a notion through separate sections in his works titled ‘mental existence’, and he raises suspicions about a separate and established realm of existence. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), in defence of this distinction, replied that Rāzī’s understanding of Avicenna is wrong and that the form acquired is a simile of, rather than identical to, the extra-mental form. From Jurjānī on, the discussion took new turns and some notion of mental existence began to be accepted by theologians as well as by philosophers. Some theologians, now affirming some notion of mental existence, still denied a separate reality to mental existence.<sup>2</sup> Following this characterisation, new concepts such as simile (*muthul*), estimated existence (*mawjūd al-mawhūm*) and realm of the things themselves (*naḥs al-amr*), were heavily discussed in later traditions. Kemalpaşazāde (d. 940/1534), Taşköprüzāde (d. 968/1561) and Gelenbevi are three of the most important figures of the Ottoman tradition who wrote separate treatises on mental existence and the realm of the things themselves.

The following extract is chosen from Gelenbevi’s *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-dhihnī* (‘Treatise on Mental Existence’).<sup>3</sup> The selected text is a good example of these later developments of the discussions around mental existence, where the realm of the things themselves, estimated being, and discussions on non-existence are combined with the discussions on divine knowledge, universality of divine knowledge, and the all-comprehensive nature of divine knowledge. Gelenbevi’s text is hard to follow in depth and he is also rather cursory in his transitions between these wide-ranging topics.

Gelenbevi uses the issues of relation and verification of propositions as the basis of his discussion. This follows under the four examples of a) the cases of relations, such as the relation between the dawn and the (day)light; b) the truth of a proposition that ‘the simile of this world is possible’; c) a leaf falling in a dark night when there is no perceiver of the event; d) the proposition that the existence of ‘(the mythical bird) Anqa is possible’ and e) the proposition that ‘Zayd is blind’.

<sup>2</sup> For a history of mental existence and the various clusters of discussions that took place, see Murat Kaş, “Mental Existence Debates in the Post-Classical Period of Islamic Philosophy. Problems of the Category and Essence of Knowledge”, *Nazariyat*, 4/3 (2018), pp. 49–84.

<sup>3</sup> The treatise was published in a compilation of popular scholarly treatises of the time, under the title *Resāil-i İmtihān* (‘Treatises for the Exams’) (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1262/1846, pp. 162–6). Recently a Turkish translation of the treatise was published by Ömer Mahir Alper, relying on MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Giresun 106, fol.151b–152b; and MS Süleymaniye Library, Giresun 106, fol. 82a–83a. Alper presents a more complete version of the treatise, including an introductory paragraph which offers two definitions of extra-mental existence. See Ömer Mahir Alper (ed.), *Varlık ve Zihin. İslâm Felsefesinde Zihni Varlık Sorununa Metinlerle bir Giriş*, Istanbul: Klasik, 2021, pp. 469–73.

Gelenbevi explores various options within the philosophical framework where mental existence is accepted and similarly within the theological framework where mental existence is denied. Both philosophers and theologians accept that the relations are not extra-mentally existent. So the question is how do theologians explain them without referring to mental existence? Gelenbevi demonstrates how theologians realised and estimated extra-mental existence.

Although generally accepting mental existence appears to be the obvious solution, philosophers face problems within their framework where the nature of knower and known is closely connected. The third example, the case of the knowledge about a leaf falling in a dark night, also epitomises the realm of things themselves, as this category denotes those things that occur independently of the knower's cognition. Yet, Gelenbevi also uses this example to shift from a discussion of mental existence (mind here, referring to human cognition), into a wider consideration of divine knowledge. This progression in argumentation makes sense because throughout the history of Islamic theology, theological discussions on knowledge most often take divine knowledge as the essential issue and prioritised accounting for it.

Gelenbevi explains that the theologians first seek a principle of truth for each part of a proposition, i. e. the subject and the predicate, in the extra-mental world. But there are cases, similar to the above-mentioned examples, where the principle of truth is difficult to find in this way. They then find the solution in turning the proposition into a negative one. This is, following the largely accepted rule that the existence of the subject is presupposed in the affirmative propositions and the existence of the subject is not required for negative propositions.<sup>4</sup>

Gelenbevi's presentation shows how theologians developed the concept of conceptualised/estimated being in place of mental existence. Despite the apparent favouring of the theological approach, his presentation additionally scrutinises some generally accepted claims, such as the theologians' argument that the realm of extra-mental existence is equivalent to the realm of the things themselves. His analysis of where the actualisation of a leaf's falling in a dark night takes place points toward a larger discussion on the ontology of the realm of the things themselves and his presentation here has a more neutral tone. According to the philosophers, God knows universally and He and separate intellects do not possess knowledge of material and particular things. This is a universal knowledge that includes all possible knowledge of the particulars. The actual knowledge of material things and particulars require materiality on behalf of the knower. Thus, knowledge of things in their particular manifestation can only occur in lower beings. This argument apparently rules out the theologians' conception,

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<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Daşdemir, "The Problem of Existential Import in Metathetic Propositions. *Qutb al-Dīn al-Tahtānī contra Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*", *Nazariyat*, 5/2 (2019), pp. 81–118, at p. 89–91.

because according to this argument knowledge of specific and particular events, such as a leaf's falling, cannot be part of the eternal divine knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I have previously suggested that Gelenbevi's treatise on mental existence can be evaluated in the context of commentaries on 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's (d. 756/1355) *Mawāqif*: Sümeyye Parıldar, "Tracing Mental Existence in al-Galanbawi's Thought through the Commentary Tradition", *Osmanlı'da İlm-i Kelam*, ed. Osman Demir, Veysel Kaya and Kadir Gömbeyaz, İstanbul: İSAR Yayınları, 2015, pp. 165–88.

[Selected text begins on the following page]

اعلم أنّ المتكلمين أنكروا الوجود الذهني وحصروا بالوجود في الخارج وجعلوا وجود الأمور الاعتبارية في نفس الأمر كالملازمة بين الطلوع ووجود النهار، فإنّها ليست معدومة صفة كالملازمة بينه ووجود الليل وفقاً بين الحكماء والمتكلمين عبارة عن وجود مبدأ انتزاع العقل أيّاه في الخارج. فالنور الموجودة بعد الطلوع مبدأ انتزاع العقل أيّاه في الخارج، فالنور الموجودة بعد الطلوع مبدأ لانتزاع الملازمة بينه وبين وجود النهار لا بينه وبين وجود الليل. وكذا الكلام في جميع الأعراض النسبية والكمّ التي أنكروا وجودها في الخارج.

لكن لقائل أن يقول: وما يقولون في قولهم أمثال هذا العالم ممكن، فإنّه قضية صادقة عندهم في نفس الأمر. فلا بدّ من تحقّق نسبة في الخارج: إمّا بأن يكون نفس تلك النسبة من الأعيان، وهو باطل لأنّ جميع النسب من الأمور الاعتبارية وفقاً، وإمّا بأن يكون منتزعة من وجود خارجي عيني وليس كذلك، إذ ليس شيء من طرفي تلك النسبة، أعني الأمثال، ومعنى الإمكان موجودان في الخارج لتتزع هي منه، ولا يصحّ انتزاعها ممّا أضيف إليه الموضوع، أعني العالم الموجود. وإلا لصدق قول المشرك: "مثل الواجب موجود"، وهو باطل.

ولا مخلص لهم إلّا بأن يحملوا تلك القضية على السالبة وصدق السوالب بمجرد مطابقتها للنفي المحض، ولا تتوقّف على تحقّق ذلك النفي في نفس الأمر ووجوده المحقّق، ويجعلوا النسبة قولنا: "العالم متصوّر"<sup>6</sup> منتزعة من أمر موجود في الخارج، وهو من يتصوّرهما، فعلى هذا كان نفس الأمر عندهم أعمّ من الوجود الخارجي والنفي المحض. والأوّل مدار صدق الموجبات، والثاني مدار صدق السوالب، أعني بالمدار ما يقاس إليه النسبة الذهنية. فإن تطابقا بأن تكونا سلباً محضاً أو وجوداً كانت القضية صادقة، وإلا كانت كاذبة.

<sup>6</sup> في الأصل: متصورة.

Know that the theologians deny mental existence and they confine existence to what exists in the extra-mental world. They establish the existence of relational situations in the realm of things in themselves, such as the entailment between dawn and the existence of the day. So that it is not ultimate nonexistence, such as the entailment between it [i. e. dawn] and the existence of night. This is commonly agreed upon by theologians and philosophers, that its existence is based on the principle of its intellectual abstraction in the extra-mental world. So the light that is existent after dawn is the principle for the abstraction of the entailment between it and the existence of the day, but not between it and the existence of night. And such is the case with all relational accidents and quantity, the existence of which in the extra-mental world are denied.

However, one may say that when they say 'the simile of this world is possible', this is a true proposition in the realm of the things themselves according to them. It is inevitable that the actualisation of the relation is in the extra-mental world: either a) through that very relation being from the extra-mental world [but the relation is not extra-mental], and so this is invalid, because all relations are regarded as relative entities by both (philosophers and theologians); or b) that it is abstracted from an extra-mentally established existent; however, this is not the case [so this is invalid]. This is because neither of the two parts of this relation, meaning the simile and the meaning of 'possible', are existent in the extra-mental world for them to be abstracted. And it is not correct to abstract it from that to which the subject is attributed, meaning the existent world. If it were so [and the simile of this world were to be derivable from the extra-mental world] then when a person who believed that there is an equivalent to God said that 'the simile to the Necessary is existent', then that too would be true. But it is invalid.

So, there is no way out for them other than predicating these propositions on negation. And negations are accepted as true when they are only correspondent with absolute negation. And so, the instantiation of this negation does not take place in the realm of things themselves and this does not become an actual thing. And they take the relation of our statement 'the world is imagined' as abstracted from what is in the extra-mental world. And that is, who is imagining it. With this, the realm of the things themselves, according to them, becomes more general than extra-mental existents and absolute negation. The first one [i. e. extra-mental existence] is the principle of truth for affirmatives and the second one [i. e. absolute negation] is the principle of truth for negations. By 'the principle', I mean that to which mental relation is compared. Being absolute-negative or being existent, if both are correspondent, then the proposition is true. Otherwise, the proposition is false.



وأقول: والحقّ أنّ نفس الأمر عندهم أعمّ من الوجود الخارجي المحقّق ومن الوجود الخارجي الموهوم الذي توهم وجوده مركوز في طبع البشر، إذ لا يسعهم إنكار صدق قولنا إمكان أمثال هذا العالم متحقّق في نفس الأمر. فالقول بأنّ الوجود في نفس الأمر عندهم مساوٍ للوجود الخارجي المحقّق باطل، بل هم جعلوا الوجود الموهوم الذي توهم مركوز في طبع البشر بدل الوجود الذهني، كما لا يخفى على ذي فطرة.

وأقول: لنا على الحكماء، في تعميم الوجود في نفس الأمر من الوجود الذهني، بحث قويّ وهو أنّ نسبة السقوط إلى الورقة الساقطة في ليلة ظلماء متحقّقة في نفس الأمر قطعاً. فإن كان المصحّح لوجودها في نفس الأمر وجود طرفيها الذين تنتزع هي منهما في الخارج، أعني الورقة والحركة الموجودتين القابلتين للإحساس، فذلك بعينه مذهب المتكلّمين المستغنين عن الوجود الذهني. وإن كان الوجود المصحّح وجودها في ذهن من الأذهان، فإمّا في ذهن من الأذهان السافلة وهو باطل إذ لم ترسم في ذهن حيوان، وإمّا في ذهن من الأذهان العالية: إمّا على وجه جزئيّ وهو باطل عندهم إذ المادّيات والمتغيّرات غير مرتسمة عندهم في المبادي العالية على الوجه الجزئي، وإمّا على وجه كليّ فحينئذ نقول: ذلك الوجود إمّا وقت السقوط لا قبله، فيلزم حدوث علم المبادي العالية وهو محال لاسيما في علم الواجب، وإمّا أزلاً وأبداً فيلزم تحقّق نسبة السقوط الحادثة في الأزل وذلك سفسطة. وأيضاً ذلك الوجود هو بعينه هو وجودها الأزليّ فما وجودها الحادث الغير الأزليّ.

I say: The truest position is that the realm of the things themselves, according to them, is more general than the realised extra-mental existence and the estimated extra-mental existence whose conceptualisation is firmly fixed in human nature. Because they cannot deny the truthfulness of our statement that the possibility of the similitude of this world is realised in the realm of the things themselves. Thus, the claim that the existence in the realm of the things themselves, for them, is equivalent to actualised in the extra-mental world is not valid. Instead, they consider 'the estimated existence whose conceptualisation is firmly fixed in human nature' to be in place of mental existence, as it is not hidden to the ones with true primordial nature.

I say: Understanding existence in the realm of the things themselves as being broader than mental existence provides us [i. e. theologians] a stronger position against the philosophers. And it is that the fall of a leaf that has fallen in a dark night is ultimately actualised in the realm of the things themselves.<sup>7</sup> What verifies its existence [i. e. the relation between the falling and the leaf] in the realm of the things themselves is the existence of both sides that is abstracted from the external, meaning that the leaf and the movement are two existents, capable of perceivability. And this is exactly the position of the theologians [because they claimed that the relation was derived from the extra-mental world], whose theories do not need a notion of mental existence. And<sup>8</sup> if the existence (of the relation between the leaf and falling) established its existence in a mind of minds, it is the case that a) it will be in a mind among the lower minds and this is invalid, as such imagination is not conceived in the mind of animals; or it is the case that b) it is in a mind among the minds of higher beings. [There are two options]. It could be in a particular manner, and this is invalid according to (the philosophers), because material and changeable things are not imaginable, according to them, in higher principles in a particular manner. Or it could be in a universal manner. In this case, we say that the existence (of this relation) is either at the time of falling and not before, and this necessitates temporality of the knowledge of higher principles, which is impossible, especially with regard to the knowledge of the Necessary Being. Or (another option is that the relation) would be eternal without a beginning and an end, but then this requires that the actualisation of the relation of falling which is temporal, is occurrent in eternity and this is nonsense. And again, this existence itself is its eternal existence, and (then one cannot help but wonder) what is its temporal existence which is different from its eternal existence?<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The realms of actualised beings, the mental beings and the things themselves have been also discussed in terms of their comprehensiveness. You can follow the previous discussions before Gelenbevi from Taşköprüzâde and Kemalpaşazâde's texts: Mehmet Aktaş, *Kemalpaşazâde'nin Zihni Varlık Risâlesi. Tahkik ve Değerlendirme*, MA thesis, Marmara University, Istanbul, 2014; Ömer Mahir Alper, "Taşköprüzâde, Zihni Varlığa Dair Tartışmalarda Özün ve Hakikatin Tesbiti", *Osmanlı Felsefesi Seçme Metinler*, ed. Ömer Mahir Alper, Istanbul: Klasik, 2015, pp. 235–302.

<sup>8</sup> Here Gelenbevi will use this example to demonstrate how accepting mental existence, as in the case of the philosophers, may lead to unsound possibilities.

<sup>9</sup> One and the same thing cannot be temporal and eternal at the same time, since this is a contradiction.

فالحقّ ما ذهب إليه المتكلّمون من أنّ وجود تلك النسبة في نفس الأمر عبارة عن وجود مبدأ انتزعتها في الخارج أو توهم وجود النسبة المنتزعة بعد السقوط مركز في طبع البشر. ولا مخلص إلا بأنّ يقال: إنهم لا ينكرون كون وجود أمثال تلك النسبة في نفس الأمر عبارة عن وجود مبدأ انتزعتها في الخارج، ولكن يقولون إنّ مبدأ الانتزاع لا يكون موجوداً خارجياً في جميع الموادّ، بل يكون في بعضها موجوداً ذهنياً كما في قولهم العناء ممكن، وحيث انقسم مبدأ الانتزاع إلى الموجود الخارجي والذهني. فقد كان الوجود في نفس الأمر أعمّ من الوجود الذهني، فتحقّق الثبوت الكلّيّ وسائر المعقولات الثانية للإنسان في نفس الأمر عبارة عن وجود الإنسان في الذهن، إذ الكلّيّة ونسبتها إليه كلاهما أمران انتزاعيان انتزاعاً من الموجود الذهني لا من الموجود الخارجي، إذ لا كلّيّة ولا نسبة في الخارج.

And the truth is the argument of the theologians that the existence of these relations in the realm of the things themselves is solely the existence of the principle of their abstraction in the extra-mental world or estimation of the existence of the abstracted relation after the fall [of the leaf], which is firmly fixed in human nature. And there is no way out of this other than to say that (the philosophers) are not denying the existence of similitudes being those relations in the realm of the things in themselves, which exist solely as principles of abstraction in the extra-mental world. However, (the philosophers) say that the principle of abstraction is not extra-mentally existent in all matters. On the contrary, in some cases (the principles of abstraction) exist as mental existence, such as their saying 'Anqa is possible'. In this way they divide the principle of abstraction into the categories of extra-mental existent, and mental existent. And assuredly, existence in the realm of things themselves is more general than mental existence. In the case of establishment of universality and secondary universal for the human being,<sup>10</sup> the establishment takes place in the realm of things themselves solely through the human being as a mental existent.<sup>11</sup> For the universal and its relation to it [i. e. the concept of human being] are both abstracted situations, abstractions from mental existence, not from extra-mental existence, because no universal and no relation exists in the extra-mental world.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> That is when universality or a secondary universal is attributed to the human being.

<sup>11</sup> In other words, the human being that is being connected with the universal is no longer the human being in the extra-mental world, but rather a mental concept, the concept of human being.

<sup>12</sup> The reader will find the sentence clearer when considering the following example: the human being is a species. Here, it would also be useful to remember how secondary intelligibles are derived from the first level abstractions from the extra-mental objects. Thus, 'tableness', for example, is a first level abstraction, in which relation to the extra-mental world still remains, whereas universality is a further abstraction made from mental existents and first level abstractions.

وهم لم يرتضوا كون الوجود الموهوم مصححاً للوجود في نفس الأمر إلا فيما كان مبدأ الانتزاع موجوداً في الخارج أو في الذهن تحقيقاً كما في قولهم: "زيد أعمى" في الخارج، فإن العمى مفهوم عديمي سلبي ومجموع الذات، وذلك المفهوم معدوم في الخارج تحقيقاً، لأنّ عدم الجزء يوجب عدم الكلّ ومعنى حمله على زيد اتّحاده في الوجود الخارجي أو الموهوم، إذ وجود زيد محقق ووجود الأعمى موهوم ولا يتحد المحقق مع الموهوم، لكن ربما يتوهم أنّ وجود مفهوم الأعمى بعينه وجود زيد، وهذا القدر كافٍ في صدق هذا الحمل، لأنّ ذلك الاتّحاد الموهوم منتزع من زيد والعمى الموجودين، ووجوده في نفس الأمر إمّا عبارة عن وجود مبدأ الانتزاع في الخارج، وإمّا عبارة عن وجوده الموهوم المتفرّع على وجود مبدأ الانتزاع. هكذا يجب أن يحقّق مذهبهم، فاضبط هذا.

They [i. e. the philosophers] are not content with estimated being as the verifier of existence in the realm of the things themselves. The only exception to this is when the principle of abstraction<sup>13</sup> is existent in the extra-mental world or in the mind, such as their saying 'Zayd is blind' in confirmation of what is in the extra-mental world. In this case blindness is a negating non-existent concept. The combination of the self [i. e. Zayd] and this concept is non-existent in the extra-mental world in terms of its realisation.<sup>14</sup> This is because non-existence of the part necessitates non-existence of the whole.<sup>15</sup> And the meaning of its predication on Zayd is its unification in the extra-mental or estimated existence. This is because the existence of Zayd is actualised and the existence of blindness is estimated. And something realised does not unite with something estimated. However, maybe it is possible to assume that existence of the notion of blindness is nothing but the existence of Zayd. And this is enough for the truthfulness of this predication. Because this estimated unification is abstracted from Zayd and blindness, which are two existents. And its existence<sup>16</sup> in the realm of things themselves is either solely the existence of the principle of abstraction in the extra-mental world or it is solely the conceptualised existence built on the existence of the principle of abstraction. This is how (the philosophers') claim should be verified, and so apprehend this.

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<sup>13</sup> That is the reality from which it is abstracted; the foundation/base that is the source of its abstraction.

<sup>14</sup> Meaning the combination itself is non-existent, as blindness is what one derives from the actions, behavioural etc. implications of the actual existent human being, and it is not itself existent, thus when someone is regarded as blind, it is not considered to be a combination of the person and blindness. The combination is non-existent.

<sup>15</sup> As the part (i. e. the blindness) is non-existent, so the whole (i. e. the combination of Zayd and blindness) is also non-existent.

<sup>16</sup> That is the unification of Zayd and blindness.

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## Part II: Metaphysics





## Divine Attributes

Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī (c. 5th/11th century),  
*al-Tamhīd fī bayān al-tawhīd*

ANGELIKA BRODERSEN

Abū Shakūr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Sayyid ibn Shu‘ayb al-Sālimī al-Kashshī flourished in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century in Transoxania. We know next to nothing about his life, as the Ḥanafite biographical works do not mention him. He gives a few details of his life and career himself. For example, he reports an encounter with his teacher Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza al-Khāṭib in the 460s hijra (corresponding to the 1070s CE) in Samarqand,<sup>1</sup> and mentions his studies with Rukn al-Dīn wa-l-Islām Shams al-A‘imma Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥalawānī al-Bukhārī (d. 448/1056), a Ḥanafī jurist in Bukhārā.<sup>2</sup> Thus, al-Sālimī cannot easily be assigned to one of the main centres of Ḥanafite scholarship, but he was active in a wider area. Concerning the year and place of his death, no information is available.

According to the current state of research, Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī is the first Māturīdite author who explicitly names Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/935) and his successors, and contrasts Ash‘arite theology with that of the Ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā‘a, in his view the Māturīdites. This exclusion of the Ash‘arites from the Ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā‘a, which occurs in different passages in al-Sālimī’s *al-Tamhīd fī bayān al-tawhīd* (‘Introduction in the Explication of the Unity’), reflects the theological-historical and religious-political situation in Transoxania during the Seljuk period in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century. These rulers pursued a kind of persecution of the adherents of Ash‘arism by assigning important political posts to Ḥanafites. Accordingly, on the theological side, there is a tendency to observe that Ḥanafite theologians were as opposed to their Ash‘arite competitors as they were to Mu‘tazilism.

In this context, an important complex of arguments concerns the evaluation of the divine attributes (*Tamhīd*, Chapter 4). In accord with the Ash‘arites, the

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<sup>1</sup> Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī, *al-Tamhīd fī bayān al-tawhīd*, in Angelika Brodersen, *Zwischen Māturīdiyya und Aṣ‘ariyya. Abū Šakūr as-Sālimī und sein Tamhīd fī bayān at-tawhīd*, Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Māturīdites affirm the reality of God's attributes, in contrast to the Mu'tazilites' doctrine (*Tamhīd*, Chapter 4/1). Here, the Sunnis argue against the Mu'tazila as follows: The denial of the attributes would also be the denial of the attributed, to which then the opposites of the attributes would apply. That is impossible with God. Moreover, God cannot know, see and hear things by His essence. If that were the case, His essence would be identical with His knowledge, sight, hearing, and so forth. Hence all attributes would be identical to each other. And because the attributes are not different from God's essence, there are no multiple eternal entities.

A particularity of the Māturīdite doctrine, however, concerns the assessment of the attributes of action, which the Māturīdiyya, as opposed to the Ash'ariyya, regard as invariably eternal in the divine essence. Decisive here is the different treatment of the divine action, which, according to the Māturīdite conception, is a single, eternal attribute (*Tamhīd*, Chapter 4/3), while al-Ash'arī has the individual acts in mind (*Tamhīd*, Chapter 2/6). Against this background, the following selection depicts the Māturīdites' discussion of the divine attributes dealing with the different opponents' arguments.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 115–9.

[Selected text begins on the following page]

## الباب الرابع في إثبات الصفات

### القول الأول في الصفات

قال المهتدي أبو شكور السالمي وفقه الله تعالى: اعلم بأن الله تعالى موجود قديم موصوف بصفاته، ولا يجوز أن يقال: قديم مع صفاته، لأن كلمة مع للمقارنة بين شيئين والصفة ليس هي شيئاً غير الموصوف حتى نقول: إن الصفة والموصوف شيئان.

فإن قال أحد بأن الصفة ماذا، شيء أو غير شيء؟ ولو قلنا: إن الصفة ليست بشيء فالموصوف كيف يكون موصوفاً بلا شيء؟ ولو قلنا: إن الصفة شيء فهذا الشيء يكون غير الموصوف فلا يجوز أن يكون قديماً. الجواب: أن نقول بأن هذا صفة الشيء، ولا نقول: شيء أو غير شيء؛ فإن قيل بأن الصفة قديمة أو غير قديمة؟ نقول بأن هذا صفة القديم، لأن الذات موصوف قديم بصفاته.

ولا يجوز أن يقال: إن صفاته تقوم بذاته، ولكن نقول: ذاته موصوف بصفاته.

ولا جائز أن يقال بأنه إن صفاته تقوم بذاته موصوف بالوصف، بل نقول: إنه موصوف بالصفة، لأن الوصف صفة الواصف وهو كان موصوفاً قبل أن يصفه أحد.

ولا جائز أن يقال: إنه قديم بجميع صفاته، لأن الجمع والفرق لا يجوز في صفاته. فنقول: قديم بصفاته.

وبعض الناس أنكروا الصفات والنعوت أصلاً وقالوا: إن الصفة والنعت ليس هو ذات الباري، فلا بد من أن يكون غيره. وإذا كان غيره لا يخلو إما أن يكون قديماً أو حادثاً محدثاً. ولا جائز أن يكون حادثاً محدثاً، لأنه يوجب القول بحلول المحدث في القديم، وهذا كفر. ولا جائز أن يقال بأنه قديم، لأن الصفات لو كانت قديمة يوجب القول بإثبات القديمين وثلاثة وأكثر، وهذا محال. وهو قول المعتزلة، وقالوا: إن الله حي قادر عليم سميع بصير يريد بذاته. أما لا<sup>4</sup> يجوز أن تكون له حياة أو قدرة أو علم أو سمع أو بصر، لأن هذه الأشياء تصير علّة لصيرورته موصوفاً بهذه الصفة، ولا جائز أن تكون له علّة أو لصفته علّة. ثم الصفة لا تخلو إما أن تكون هي الموصوف أو غير الموصوف، وكلاهما محال.

<sup>4</sup> جميع النسخ هكذا.

## Chapter 4: Affirmation of the Attributes

### First Section: The Attributes

The guided Abū Shakūr al-Sālīmī – may God give him success – said: Know that God the Exalted is existent and qualified by His attributes in eternity. It is not possible to say: eternal *with* His attributes. The expression *with* denotes a proximity of two things. The attribute is not other than the qualified, so we cannot say: The attribute and the qualified are two (distinct) things.

If someone asks: What is the attribute, a thing or nothing? If we say: The attribute is nothing, how could the qualified be qualified as ‘nothing’? If we say: The attribute is a thing, this thing is not identical with the qualified, and cannot be eternal. The (correct) answer is that we say that this is the attribute of the thing, and we do not say: a thing or nothing. To the question about whether the attribute is eternal or not eternal, we say that this is the attribute of the eternal because the essence is qualified as eternal in its attributes.

It is not possible to say: God’s attributes subsist in His essence. Instead, we say: His essence is qualified by His attributes.

It is not possible to say that if God’s attributes subsist in His essence, He would be qualified by the qualification. Rather, we say: God is qualified by the attribute, because ‘qualification’ is the attribute of the qualifying subject, whereas God had been qualified before anyone qualified Him.

It is not possible to say: God is eternal *in all* His attributes, for combination and separation is not possible in His attributes. We say: [God is] eternal in His attributes.

Some people denied the attributes and the qualities in principle, and said: The attribute – or the quality – is not the essence of the Creator, thus it must be other than Him. In this case, it has to be either eternal or contingent and created. It is not possible that the attribute is contingent and created, because this would result in the indwelling of the created in the Eternal. This is unbelief. Nor is it possible to say that (the attribute) is eternal, because this would entail the existence of two, three or more eternal entities. This is absurd. The latter is the view of the Mu’tazila. They said: God is living, powerful, knowing, hearing, seeing and willing by His essence. It is not possible for Him to have life, power, knowledge, hearing or sight, because these things would be the cause for His becoming qualified with the respective attribute. But, neither God nor any of His attributes can have a cause. Thus, the attribute would be either the qualified or other than the qualified. Both are absurd.

وأما أهل السنّة والجماعة قالوا: إنّ الله تعالى لم يزل كان موصوفاً منعوتاً أزليّاً ولا يزال يكون موصوفاً منعوتاً أبديّاً. ثمّ نقول: إنّ صفات الله عزّ وجلّ لا هي ذاته ولا هي غير ذاته بل ذلك صفاته، وبيانه أنّ الصفة إذا كانت غير الموصوف فإنّه يوجب أن يقوم بذاته. والشيء إذا قام بالشيء فإنّه يقوم به بالتمكّن والحلول كالعرض في الجوهر، وكلّ ما جاز عليه التمكن والحلول جاز عليه النقل والنزول، وهذا من صفات المحدثات. دلّ أنّ الصفة ليست هي غير الموصوف.

وإنّما قلنا: إنّ الصفات ليست هي الموصوف، لأنّ الصفات لو كانت هي الموصوف يؤدّي إلى إثبات الصانعين وثلاثة وأكثر، لأنّ الموصوف صانع وهو موصوف بصفة العلم وبصفة القدرة وبصفة الحياة وغيره. فإذا كانت الصفة والموصوف واحداً فالصفة تكون صانعاً فيكون العلم صانعاً والحياة صانعاً والقدرة صانعاً، وكلّ صفة على حدة تكون صانعاً على حدة، وهذا محال. فصحّ أنّ الصفات ليست هي الموصوف ولا هي غير الموصوف.

فلهذا المعنى قلنا: إنّ الصفة لا هي هو ولا هي غيره. وأما ما قالت المعتزلة بأنّ الله تعالى ليست له صفة، قلنا: نفى الصفة يوجب نفى الموصوف، لأنّ الصانع لو لم يكن عالماً لكان لا يعلم الأشياء والأحوال، ومن أحدث شيئاً وهو لا يدري ما الذي صنع وفعل فيوصف بالجهل فلا يكون صانعاً، وهذا محال. فلزم أن يكون عالماً حتّى يصحّ ويجوز أن يكون إلهاً ربّاً صانعاً جلّ جلاله. وإذا ثبت أنّه عالم يقتضي أن يعلم الأشياء كلّها والأحوال بأسرها في جميع أوقاتها وأماكنها، وإذا علم الأشياء صارت الأشياء معلومةً له، وبدون العلم لا يجوز أن يكون الشيء معلوماً للعالم، لأنّ المعلوم يقتضي العلم لا محالة. فثبت أنّ الشيء بالعلم صار معلوماً له، فنفي العلم يوجب نفى العالم وإثبات العلم يوجب إثبات العالم، فصحّ ما قلنا.

As for the people of the Sunna and the community, they said: God the Exalted was qualified by His attributes in pre-eternity, and He will continue to be qualified forever. Then we say: The attributes of God the Almighty are neither Him nor other than Him, but they are His attributes. The explanation is that if the attribute were other than the qualified [i. e. God], this would require it to subsist in His essence. And if one thing subsists in another, this would be by location and indwelling, as it is the case with the accident in the substance. Everything subject to location and indwelling is subject to location and translocation, and these are attributes of the created things. This proves that the attribute is not other than the qualified.

We further said: The attributes are not identical with the qualified, for if the attributes were identical with the qualified this would lead to the affirmation of two, three and more creators, because the qualified is a creator, qualified by the attribute of knowledge, the attribute of power, the attribute of life, and others. If the attribute and the qualified were one, then the attribute would be a creator, so that knowledge would be a creator, life would be a creator, and power would be a creator, and each attribute will be a creator on its own. This is absurd. Therefore, the correct solution is that the attributes are neither the qualified nor other than the qualified.

Therefore, we said: The attribute is neither He [i. e. God] nor other than Him. As for the Mu'tazila's doctrine that God the Exalted does not have any attribute, we said: The denial of the attribute necessitates the denial of the qualified. Because if the Creator was not knowing, He would not know the things and the states, and whoever brings a thing into existence and is unaware of what he has created and done is qualified by ignorance, and cannot be a creator. This is impossible. It is necessary that He knows, so that it is correct and possible for Him to be a God, Lord and Creator, may His Majesty be Glorified. If it is proven that He knows, this requires that He knows all things and states in their totality, in all times and places, and if He knows all things, things become known to Him. Without knowledge, it is not possible for a thing to be known to the knower, because what is known necessarily requires knowledge. Therefore, it is proven that the thing became known to him by knowledge. So the denial of knowledge requires the denial of the knower and the proof of knowledge presupposes the knower. Thus, our proposition is correct.



يؤكدّه وهو أنّ العالم بوقوف العلم على المعلوم يصير المعلوم معلوماً له، وإذا لم يكن له علم فبأيّ شيء يقف على المعلوم؟ وإذا لم يقف على المعلوم فإنّه لا يعلم الأشياء، وهذا محال. فإن قيل: الباري عزّ وجلّ يعلم الأشياء بالذات والمعلومات كلّها تكون معلومة له بذاته. فنقول: إنّ ذات عالم فنفي الصفات لا يوجب نفى الذات. قلنا: العالم لو علم الأشياء بالذات والمعلوم معلوم له بذاته يكون ذاته علماً. فيكون العلم هو الذات والذات هو العلم، لأنّ المعلوم لا يكون معلوماً بدون الوقوف عليه وبدون العلم، فكلّ ما يقف به على المعلوم يكون عالماً.

فإن قيل: لو قلنا بأنّه موصوف بصفة يوجب القول بإثبات القديمين وثلاثة وأكثر، لأنّ الصفة لا يجوز أن يكون حادثاً محدثاً، ولو قلنا بأنّه قديم يكون في هذا إثبات القديمين وأكثر. قلنا: هذا لا يلزم، لأنّ الصفة ليست هي غير الموصوف، والصفة إنّما تكون غير الموصوف إذا كان عرضاً، فلا يوجب القول بغيريّته عن الموصوف فلا يكون فيه إثبات القديمين. وقد يجوز أن تكون الصفة صفةً ولا يكون عرضاً كما أنّه يجوز أن يكون الذات موجوداً وليس بجوهر، فإذا كان الذات لا يكون جوهرًا فكذلك الصفة لا يكون عرضاً، فلا يلزم.

فصحّ بهذا الدليل أنّ الصفة لا هي هو ولا هي غيره، وإذا ثبت هذا المعنى في العلم يثبت في جميع الصفات كالقدرة والحياة والسمع والبصر وغير ذلك.

### القول الثاني في صفات الذات وصفات الفعل

قال أبو الحسن الأشعري: إنّ صفات الذات قديمة وهي ثمانية: الحياة والقدرة والعلم والكلام والسمع والبصر والإرادة والقدم، وما وراء ذلك من الصفات من مقتضيات القدرة والعلم، وما يدخل تحت القدرة فهو من صفات الفعل كلّها محدثة.

This is confirmed by the fact that the knower knows the object of knowledge when the knowledge encounters the known object. And if he has no knowledge, how can he become acquainted with what is to be known? If he is not aware of what is to be known, then he does not know things, and this is impossible. If it is said: The almighty Creator knows the things by His essence, and all known things are known to Him by His essence. We say: He is a knowing essence, and the denial of the attributes does not require the denial of the essence. We reply: If the knower knew the things by his essence, and the object of knowledge is known to him by his essence, his essence would be knowledge. Consequently, the knowledge would be the essence, and the essence would be the knowledge, because the known object is not known without encountering it. Everyone who encounters the known object by his knowledge is a knowing subject.

If someone objects: If we say that He is qualified by an attribute, this would require the affirmation of two, three, or more eternal entities. For the attribute cannot be contingent and created. Moreover, if we say that the attribute is eternal, this also requires the affirmation of two, or more, eternal entities. We reply: This is not compulsory, because the attribute is not other than the qualified. This would be the case if the attribute were an accident. Hence, discussing the distinction between the attribute and the qualified is not required, and we do not need to affirm two eternal entities. It is possible that the attribute is an attribute, but not an accident; just as it is possible that the essence is an existent, but not a substance. If the essence does not have to be a substance, likewise the attribute does not have to be an accident, hence it is not compulsory.

This proof confirms that the attribute is neither Him nor other than Him. If this meaning is proven for knowledge, it is proven for all attributes such as power, life, hearing, seeing, and others.

## **Second Section: Attributes of the Essence and Attributes of Action**

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī taught: The attributes of the essence are eternal. These are eight: life, power, knowledge, speech, hearing, seeing, will and eternity. The other attributes belong to the requirements of power and knowledge, and what belongs to power are the attributes of action. All of them are created.

وقالت المتقشّفة من الكراميّة: إنّ صفات الذات قديمة وهي خمسة: الحياة والقدرة والعلم والسمع والبصر، وما وراء ذلك نعوت وليست بصفات كلّها محدثة، وقال بعضهم: حادثة. وهذا كلّه كفر محال، لأنّ الله تعالى قبل حدوث هذه الصفات من زعمهم يكون ناقصاً وبعد حدوث هذه الصفات يصير كاملاً ويزيد صفة، ومن اعتقد بمثل هذا فإنّه يصير كافراً، ولأنّ الحدود والإحداث يوجب التغيير من صفة إلى صفة ومن حال إلى حال. فلا يجوز التغيير على الله تعالى.

قال المهتدي أبو شكور السالمي وفقه الله: ناظرْتُ حشويّاً من الكراميّة ببوزجان فقلت له: ماذا تقولون في الصانع وصفاته من صفات الفعل؟ قال: إنّها حادثة محدثة. فقلت: إنّ الصانع قبل حدوث هذه الصفة يكون ناقص الصفة؟ وهذا محال. قلت: وماذا تقولون في الأنبياء عليهم السلام قبل الوحي؟ قال بأنّ النبي قبل الوحي ما كان نبياً وما كان معصوماً عمّا يوجب سقوط العدالة. قلت: إذا فعل شيئاً يوجب سقوط العدالة يصير فاسقاً. فلو أنّ الله تعالى أوحى إليه في تلك الساعة يكون وحياً إلى شخص فاسق فيكون الرسول فاسقاً. قلت: وماذا تقولون فيمن قال: لا إله إلاّ الله، واعتقد غير ذلك، نعوذ بالله؟ قال بأنّه مؤمن. قلت: فما دينكم إلاّ أن تقولوا بأنّ الربّ ناقص والرسول فاسق والمؤمن منافق؟ والله ورسوله منزّهان عمّا قلتهم. فتحيّر وانقطع عن كلامه، لأنّ الباطل لا يقابل الحقّ، والحقّ يعلو ولا يعلو، والله الهادي إلى الصواب.

A group within the Karrāmiyya,<sup>5</sup> named the Mutaqashshifa,<sup>6</sup> claimed: The attributes of the essence are eternal. They are five: life, power, knowledge, hearing and seeing. Beyond that are descriptions and not attributes. All of them are created; some of them said: contingent. This is all disbelief and impossible, because their view implies that God the Exalted had been deficient before the occurrence of these attributes, and only after their occurrence He became complete and gained an attribute. Whoever thinks this way becomes a disbeliever. Moreover, occurrence and bringing (things) into existence necessitate changing from one attribute to another, and from one condition to another. However change is not applicable to God the Exalted.

The guided Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī – may God give him success – said: Once I argued with a Ḥashwī, a member of the Karrāmiyya, in Būzjān. I asked him: What is your opinion about the Creator and His attributes of action? He answered: They are created and contingent. I asked: Thus, the Creator before the occurrence of this attribute is lacking the attribute? This is impossible. I kept on asking: What do you say concerning the Prophets – peace be upon them – before the revelation? He replied that the Prophet before the revelation was not a prophet and was not protected from losing his uprightness. I said: If he does something that requires the fall of justice, he becomes an evildoer. If God revealed to him at that time, this would be a revelation to an evildoer, and the messenger would be an evildoer. Then I asked: What do you say about someone who said: There is no deity but God, and thinks otherwise – God forbid? He answered: He is a believer. I said: What is your religion, except that you say that the Lord is deficient, and the Messenger is an evildoer, and the believer is a hypocrite? God and His Messenger are beyond what you claim. Thereupon he [i. e. my interlocutor] was baffled and at a loss for words, because no falsehood compares to the truth, and the truth (always) prevails and is (never) defeated. And God guides to the correct [path].

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<sup>5</sup> The Karrāmiyya, followers of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Karrām (d. 255/869), was a sect which flourished in the central and eastern parts of the Muslim world, from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century until the Mongol invasions in the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century. In some aspects, the doctrine of the Karrāmiyya was similar to that of the Ḥanafīyya, but was rejected by the Sunnis due to the exaggerated literalism and anthropomorphism.

<sup>6</sup> Literally ‘the ascetics’. It is not entirely clear whether the author really means a specific group within the Karrāmiyya as a whole, since ‘Mutaqashshifa’ was also used as a mock name for the entire Karrāmiyya (see Ulrich Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunni Theology in Samarqand*, trans. Rodrigo Adem, Leiden: Brill, 2014, p. 77).

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## God and Creation

‘Ubayd Allāh al-Samarqandī (d. 701/1301), *al-‘Aqīda al-rukniyya fī sharḥ lā ilāha ill Allāh Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh*

LEJLA DEMIRI

The selected passages are from *al-‘Aqīda al-rukniyya fī sharḥ lā ilāha ill Allāh Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh* (‘Rukn al-Dīn’s *Aqīda*: A Commentary on the Shahāda’) by Abū Muḥammad Rukn al-Dīn ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Samarqandī (d. 701/1301), a Māturīdī scholar originally from Samarqand.<sup>1</sup> He studied in Baghdad and then moved to Damascus where he spent the last ten years of his life. He taught in various mosques in Damascus as well as the famous Zāhiriyya madrasa. He further had a teaching circle in the Umayyad Mosque, and was later appointed as *mudarris* (lecturer) at the Nūriyya madrasa.<sup>2</sup>

Not much is known about ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Samarqandī’s biography, though he was considered one of the major figures of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī school at the time. With his numerous works, al-Samarqandī contributed to systematic theology (*kalām*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Qur’anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), Hadith and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*). Despite the rich textual material he left behind, he is almost unknown in modern scholarship. Apart from his *‘aqīda*<sup>3</sup> and his lengthy work in *uṣūl al-fiqh* comparing Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī principles of jurisprudence,<sup>4</sup> none of his writings have been published,<sup>5</sup> and other than two very short encyclopedia entries, one on his life and another on his *‘aqīda*,<sup>6</sup> to my knowledge, there exists no other study about him or his scholarship.

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<sup>1</sup> Rukn al-Dīn ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *al-‘Aqīda al-rukniyya fī sharḥ lā ilāha ill Allāh Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh*, ed. Mustafa Sinanoğlu, Istanbul: İSAM, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> For his life and work, see Mustafa Sinanoğlu, “Semerkandī, Ubeydullah b. Muhammed”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009, vol. 36, pp. 480–1.

<sup>3</sup> See fn. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Rukn al-Dīn ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *Jāmi‘ al-uṣūl fī bayān al-qawā‘id al-ḥanafīyya wa-l-shāfi‘iyya fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. İsmet Garibullah Şimşek, Istanbul: İSAM, 2020, 2 vols.

<sup>5</sup> A critical edition of two of his treatises, one on *‘ubūdiyya* (servanthood) and one on *tawba* (repentance) are currently being prepared by Lejla Demiri.

<sup>6</sup> Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “el-‘Akīdetü’z-Zekiyye” [sic], *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1989, vol. 2, pp. 260–1.

Al-Samarqandī's *kalām* is combined with his sufi ideas, learning and spirituality. In his works, numerous *kalām* scholars are mentioned and quoted side by side with various sufi authorities. He does not hesitate to cite from the scholarly literature of different theological schools. He is happy to draw his inspiration from both Ash'arī and Māturīdī sources, blending them with those of sufis of diverse *mashrabs* (spiritual dispositions).

The selection here provides a glimpse into his theology. The opening prayer of his *'aqida* reveals the type of theology he would put forward<sup>7</sup>: a theology of humility. The entire created realm is an indication, a sign (*āya*) leading to Him, a manifestation of His names and attributes, a mirror reflecting His perfection<sup>8</sup>. Yet God is *bāṭin* (hidden), for only He can truly know Himself<sup>9</sup>. *Ma'rifa* is ultimately a gift from God<sup>10</sup>. He is the One Who in the first place facilitates this knowledge for human beings and subsequently rewards them for having chosen His path; this is a double blessing – the blessing of *īmān* and the blessing of the reward<sup>11</sup>. Not only is the *ma'rifa* from God, but also the possibility of serving Him and of finally receiving His reward in the hereafter is entirely dependent upon His will and mercy<sup>12</sup>. All is a divine blessing, a gift from the Creator.

In addition to God's mercy and generosity, al-Samarqandī also draws our attention to divine beauty. Following the Māturīdī (as well as the Ash'arī) position on the beatific vision (*ru'yat Allāh*), he considers it to be permissible by reason, and promised by revelation without ascribing any 'modality, direction or image'. But he does not limit his exposition to scriptural texts alone, as he further develops a supportive argument established on the beauty of God. Since God is beautiful, and everyone who is beautiful requires to be seen by others, and since Heaven is the abode of favours and not the abode of trials, al-Samarqandī concludes that 'the believer is worthy of seeing Him, loving Him and longing for Him due to God's honouring him with this'<sup>13</sup>. This is a clear example of how his theology is enriched with sufi principles and explications.

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<sup>7</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqida*, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

[Selected text begins on the following page]



الحمد لله الظاهر وجوده بشهادة الكائنات، الباطن كنه هويته لتعذر معرفته بالشواهد من العقول والسمعيّات الظاهرة مصايحها من مشكاة النبوات. فالأنبياء الكرام والملائكة العظام كلهم حيارى في معرفة كنه ذاته وكنه صفاته العلى، وحقائق أسمائه الحسنى. والصلاة على نبيه المَعْتَرَفِ بعجزه حتى قال: "لا أُحْصِي عليك ثناءً"، وهو الْمُفْضَلُ على سَكَّانِ الْمَظَلَّةِ الخضراء وقاطنِ البسيطة الغبراء، محمّد خاتم النبيين، وعلى آله وأصحابه نجوم السماء إلى يوم الدين. [...]

ومما يجب الإيمان به أن نعتقد أن ما خلق الله تعالى من العوالم، علوياتها وسفلياتها، وملكيّاتها وملكوّتيّاتها، مظهرٌ لوجود الله وكمالاته. قال الله تعالى: ﴿سَتْرِهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ﴾<sup>14</sup>. [...]

قال أهل السنّة: أوّل الفرض على العقلاء معرفة الله بأنّه واجب الوجود، قديم، خالق الكائنات برمتها، علويّها وسفليّها، ملكيّها وملكوّتيّها، وليس للخلق إله غيره، وما سوى الله حادث، وهو المبدئ والمعيد، والأوّل الفرد بلا بداية، والآخر الأبدى بلا نهاية. ﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ﴾<sup>15</sup>، ولا تلحّقه الأفكار، وليس لله مثل ولا مثال، ولا يتخيّل ولا يتوهّم، ولا يحسّ، وإنّه مرئيّ بلا كيف ولا إحساس، فلا يصحّ أن يقال: إنّه محسوس، إذ الإحساس يقتضي النهاية والإدراك. ولا يُعرف ذاته ولا صفة من صفاته بالقياس، لأنّه يقتضي التشبيه، وإنّه منزّه عن الضدّ والند. وإنّه الظاهر بحسب الآيات والدلائل، وإنّه الباطن لأنّه لا يُدْرِكُ كنه ذاته. وهو بكلّ حادثٍ عليم جزئيّاً كان أو كليّاً، وإنّه قادرٌ على كلّ الممكنات موجوداتها ومعدوماتها. والمحالات لذاتها والواجب الوجود لذاته لا يدخلان تحت القدرة، لعدم المحليّة للقدرة، لا لعجز الله تعالى. فلا يوصف الله بالقدرة على خلق مثله، ولا على الجمع بين الضدّين في محلّ واحدٍ بجهةٍ واحدةٍ وغيرها من المحالات. وذاته وصفاته ليستا بمقدورتين، إذ وجوب الوجود لذاته تنافي المقدوريّة. [...]

<sup>14</sup> سورة الفصّل ٤١/٥٣.

<sup>15</sup> سورة الأنعام ٦/١٠٣.

Praise be to God, Whose existence is apparent through the testimony of the existent beings, and Whose very essence is hidden due to its unknowability through rational proofs or transmitted information derived from the clear light of the prophetic lamp. The noble Prophets and the great angels are all perplexed in knowing the very nature of His essence, the core of His exalted attributes and the real nature of His most beautiful names. Prayers be upon His Prophet who acknowledged his own incapacity, to the extent that he said: 'I cannot fully praise You',<sup>16</sup> although he was made to excel all the inhabitants beneath the continual shade of heaven and the dwellers upon the spacious earth, Muḥammad the Seal of the Prophets, and prayers be upon his family and upon his companions, the stars of heaven, until the Day of Judgment.<sup>17</sup> [...]

Among the things we are required to believe is that all the worlds that God the Exalted has created, be they high or low, visible or invisible, all are the locus of manifestation of the existence of God and His perfections. As God the Exalted says: 'We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth' [Q 41:53].<sup>18</sup> [...]

The People of the Sunna affirm that the first duty upon intelligent beings is to acknowledge that God is the Necessary Being, Pre-Eternal, the Creator of all the existent things, be they high or low, visible or invisible, and that the creation has no god other than Him; everything except for God has a beginning, and He is the Originator and the Restorer; the First and the Unique without a beginning; the Last, and the Everlasting without an end. 'Vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends all vision' [Q 6:103]; no cognition can perceive Him; God has neither likeness nor equal; no imagination or surmise can comprehend Him; neither can He be sensed; He is visible, but without (speculating upon) 'how' and without being perceived through the senses; it is not right to say: He is perceptible through the senses, since perception through the senses requires limitation and grasping. Neither His essence nor any of His attributes can be known by analogy, for this would lead to anthropomorphism, whereas He is free from (having) an opposite or an equal. He is the Manifest through signs and proofs, and He is the Hidden, for the true nature of His essence cannot be perceived. He knows everything that happens, be it particular or general, and has power (to give) contingent things existence or non-existence. Things that are impossible in themselves, or the Necessary Being Whose existence is due to Himself, do not fall under the domain of this capacity, because there is no object for the capacity to relate to, and not because of any incapacity on the part of God the Exalted. God cannot be ascribed with the power to create His equal, to bring together two opposites in a single place from one single perspective, or to do any other impossible things. His essence and His attributes are not objects of power, for being the Necessary Being Whose existence is from Himself excludes being an object of power.<sup>19</sup> [...]

<sup>16</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, "Ṣalāt", 42.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqīda*, p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62–3.

الله مريدٌ أزلاً وأبداً بإرادةٍ قديمةٍ بذاته أزلاً وأبداً، قال الله تعالى: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ﴾<sup>20</sup>، وقال: ﴿إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ ۖ هُوَ شَرٌّ لِّكَ ۖ وَلَا يَسِرُّهُ قَوْمٌ يَلْفِكُمْ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُنَاصِيكُمْ﴾<sup>21</sup>. ومن حيث العقل نقول: إنَّ الله خلق العالمَ مظهرًا ومראהً لتعرِّف العقولُ وترى بمرآة العالم ذاتَ الله تعالى وكمالاته؛ والله أمرنا بالتفكر في خلق السماوات والأرض<sup>22</sup>، وآيات الأنفس والآفاق<sup>23</sup>، لتعرف كمالات الله تعالى ونقرَّ بها ونصِفَه بها. فنقول: حدوث الورد مثلاً من شجرة هو من آيات الآفاق، يدلُّنا وينطق بلسان الحال أنَّ له مُحدثاً أحدثه، إذ ترجُّح أحد طرفي الممكن من عدم الوجود لا يكون بدون مُحدثٍ، قد عُرف ذلك ببداة العُقُول. وحسنُ صورته ورائحته اللطيفة يدلُّنا على سعة جوده ورحمته، لأنَّ الورد ليس من ضرورات حاجات الإنسان، وهو المقصود من خلق العالم. واختصاصه بوجهٍ دون وجهٍ في الكميَّة والكيفيَّة في وقت الربيع يدلُّنا على أنَّ الله تعالى مريدٌ، إذ الإرادة صفة تقتضي تخصيصَ المفعولات بوجهٍ دون وجهٍ ووقتٍ دون وقتٍ، إذ لولا الإرادة لوقعت المفعولات كلها في وقتٍ واحدٍ على هيئةٍ واحدةٍ. [...]

الله موصوفٌ بصفاتٍ لا تعدُّ ولا تُحصى، وله الأسماءُ الحسنَى بلا نهاية، ولا تعدُّ في كلِّ صفةٍ ولا في كلِّ اسم. فالله عليمٌ ما كان وما يكون وما لم يكن بعلمٍ واحدٍ. وكذلك يقدر على كلِّ الممكنات بقدره واحدةٍ. وكذا الكلام والمشية، فإنَّه متكلمٌ من الأزل إلى الأبد بكلامٍ واحدٍ، وجميعُ الكتب السماوية دالَّةٌ على ذلك الكلام الحقيقي القائم بذات الله، ولو أنزل ألوف ألوف من كتبٍ ما نفدت كلماته. وكلُّ الكائنات الماضية والواقعة في الحال والمستقبلية بمشيئةٍ واحدةٍ وإيجادٍ واحدٍ. وكذا في كلِّ صفةٍ من صفاته، لأنَّ التعدُّ يستلزم العجزَ والنقصانَ كما في حقِّ الخلق، لأنَّ صفات الخلق أعراضٌ ناقصةٌ. [...]

<sup>20</sup> سورة المائدة ١/٥.

<sup>21</sup> سورة الزمر ٣٩/٣٨.

<sup>22</sup> سورة آل عمران ١٩٠/٣: ﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَخِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾.

<sup>23</sup> سورة الفصَّل ٤١/٥٣: ﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ﴾.

God is the One Who Wills from pre-eternity to eternity with an infinitely pre-existent will [subsistent] with His essence from pre-eternity to eternity, as God the Exalted says: 'God ordains what He wills' [Q 5:1] and 'If God willed some hurt for me' [to the end of] the verse [Q 39:38]. With respect to the intellect, we say: God created the universe as a reflector<sup>24</sup> and mirror, so that the intellects may know and see through the mirror of the universe the essence of God the Exalted and His perfections. God commanded us to reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth<sup>25</sup> and on the signs within ourselves and on the horizons,<sup>26</sup> so that we may know the perfections of God the Exalted, affirm them and describe Him through them. We further state that, for instance, the coming into existence of a rose from a rosebush is one of the signs on the horizons; it stands as a proof to us and pronounces with the tongue of its whole being that it has a Creator Who brought it into existence, for choosing existence over non-existence from the two possible opposing options cannot happen without a Creator. This is known by basic intelligence. The beauty of its form and its subtle fragrance further indicate to us the abundance of His generosity and His mercy, for the rose is not one of the necessary needs of a human being, who is the purpose behind the creation of the universe. Its being in one particular way rather than another, in terms of quantity as well as quality, during springtime, further shows us that God the Exalted is the One Who Wills, for the will is an attribute which requires the acts to be particularised in a certain way and at a certain time. If there were no will, all acts would happen at the same time and in the same form.<sup>27</sup> [...]

God is described by innumerable and countless attributes, and to Him belong the most beautiful names without any limitations. There is no multiplicity within any attribute or name. So God knows what has happened, what will happen and what will never happen with one and the same knowledge. Likewise He has power over all contingent things with one and the same power. And so it is with speech, as well as with will; He is a speaker from pre-eternity to eternity with one and the same speech; and all the sacred scriptures indicate that real speech which subsists in the essence of God; and if thousands and thousands of scriptures were to be sent down, still there would be no end to His words. All the existent beings of the past, present and future are (brought into existence) with one and the same will, as well as one and the same creation. Likewise with every one of His attributes. For multiplicity necessitates inability and deficiency, as is the case with the nature of created beings, because the attributes of creation are [merely] deficient accidents.<sup>28</sup> [...]

<sup>24</sup> Following the reading of *muzhir* in the current publication, whereas a more common usage would be *mazhar*, or locus of divine manifestation.

<sup>25</sup> See the Qur'anic verse (Q 3:190): 'Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for those with understanding'.

<sup>26</sup> See the Qur'anic verse (Q 41:53): 'We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it will become clear to them that it is the Truth'.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqida*, pp. 72–3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

رؤية الله بالبصر الظاهر تجوز لعبيده عقلاً في الدنيا والآخرة، وموعودٌ تحقّقها في الجنة في الآخرة بلا كيف ولا جهة ولا صورة. والدليل على الجواز مطلقاً سؤال موسى عليه السلام بقوله: ﴿رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ﴾<sup>29</sup>، والدليل على التحقق في الآخرة قوله تعالى: ﴿وَجُودٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ﴾<sup>30</sup> إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاطِرَةٌ<sup>31</sup>، ولأنّ الله جميلٌ جمالاً يليق بالألوهية، ويجب الثناء ويجب محبة عباده له وشوقهم إليه، وكلّ جميل يجب أن يراه غيره بخلاف المغيّب الناقص، والجنة دار الكرامات لا دار الابتلاءات، والمؤمن أهلٌ لرؤيته ومحبته وشوقه إليه لإكرامه الله بذلك، وفي الدنيا إنّما لم يُر ذاته لعباده كيلا يرتفع الابتلاء ويكون الإيمان غيباً لا ضرورياً.

رؤية الله من أقسام المتشابهات التي تعرف العقول أصلها بالدلائل ولا تعرف كنهها وحقيقتها، كوزن الأعمال وكمزور الناس على صراطٍ أحدّ من السيف وأدقّ من الشّعْر، وكاليد والمجيء المذكورين في قول الله تعالى: ﴿بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ﴾<sup>31</sup>، وقوله: ﴿وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ﴾<sup>32</sup>، وما جرى مجراها. فالجواب علينا أن نؤمن بها ولا نشغل بكيفيتها ودرّك كنه حقيقتها. فالمعتزلة أنكروا الكلّ وأولوا اليد بالقدرة أو الجود والمجيء بظهور الحق والرؤية برؤية الآيات، والمشبّهة اعتقدوا يداً جسمانيّةً ومجيئاً جسمانيّاً ورؤية صورة. ودين الله بين الغلو والتقصير.

<sup>29</sup> سورة الأعراف ١٤٣/٧.

<sup>30</sup> سورة القيامة ٢٢-٢٣/٧٥.

<sup>31</sup> سورة المائدة ٦٤/٥.

<sup>32</sup> سورة الفجر ٢٢/٨٩.

Seeing God with outward vision by His servants in this world and the hereafter is permissible by reason, and its realisation in Heaven in the hereafter is promised (by revelation) without (ascribing any) modality, direction or image. The proof for the absolute permissibility is Moses' request, peace be upon him, (as indicated) in his words: 'My Lord, show me (Yourself), that I may gaze upon You' [Q 7:143], while the proof for the realisation in the hereafter is His statement, may He be Exalted: 'On that Day there will be radiant faces, looking towards their Lord' [Q 75:22–23]. Also because God is beautiful with a beauty becoming of divinity, and it is necessary for His servants to praise Him, love Him and long for Him, for everyone who is beautiful requires to be seen by others, unlike the flawed, deficient one. Heaven is the abode of favours and not the abode of trials; the believer is worthy of seeing Him, loving Him and longing for Him due to God's honouring him with this, while in this world He does not show His essence to His servants, lest the trial be eliminated and faith be [of that which is] unseen, rather than self-evident [knowledge].<sup>33</sup>

The vision of God is one of the class of ambiguous things whose basis may be known by intellects through indications, but whose very essence or true nature cannot be known – such as the weighing of deeds;<sup>34</sup> the passing of people over the Bridge sharper than a sword and thinner than a hair;<sup>35</sup> the 'hand' and the 'coming' mentioned in the words of God the Exalted: 'Truly, His hands are open wide' [Q 5:64], and 'Your Lord shall come' [Q 89:22], and other similar cases. Our response should be to believe in them without delving into their modalities or trying to grasp the inner essence of their natures. The Mu'tazila deny them all and interpret the 'hand' metaphorically as 'power' or 'generosity', the 'coming' as the 'manifestation of the truth', and the 'vision' as the 'vision of the signs', whereas the Mushabbiha (Anthropomorphists) believe in a physical hand, physical arrival and the vision of an image. However, the religion of God is between excessiveness and deficiency.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqīda*, p. 84.

<sup>34</sup> The weighing of good and bad deeds on the Day of Judgment, as indicated in the Qur'anic verses: 'We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection so that no soul is wronged in the least. Though it be of the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We shall bring it out. And We suffice for reckoners' [Q 21:47]. 'The weighing on that day is the true (weighing). As for those whose scale is heavy, they are the successful. And as for those whose scale is light: those are they who lose their souls because they used to wrong Our revelations' [Q 7:8–9].

<sup>35</sup> This is the eschatological bridge, described in prophetic tradition, as stretching over the Fire and leading to the Garden, laid for humanity to cross on the Day of Judgment. The righteous would successfully traverse, reaching their blissful abode, while the wicked would fall into the hellfire.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqīda*, p. 85.

كنه حقيقة ذات الله لا يمكن معرفته لجميع الخلائق إلى أبد الأبدن. ولهذا قال الجنيد: "لا يعرف الله إلا الله". وقال أبو بكر الصديق رضي الله عنه: "العجزُ عن درك الإدراك إدراك". وقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "كلُّكم في ذات الله حَمَقَى"، وقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم مع أنه كان سيّد النبيّين والعارفين: "لا أُحصى ثناءً عليك، أنت كما أثنيت على نفسك". لم يردّ به أنّي عرفتُ الله على الحقيقة، ولم يطاوع لساني ثناء، بل مراده لا أعلم ثناءً يليق بجلالك وعظمتك، ولا أقدرُ عليه. وأمّا قولُ أبي حنيفة رحمه الله في الفقه الأكبر: "عرّفنا الله حقَّ معرفته وما عبدناه حقَّ عبادته"، فالمرادُ حقّ المعرفة التي كُلفنا بها.

معرفة الله قدر ما يُتصوّر للعباد على ثلاثة أقسام: (١) معرفة فطريّة، وإشارة الأنبياء عليهم السلام إليها بقولهم: ﴿أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾<sup>37</sup>، وقال نبيّنا صلى الله عليه وسلم: "كلُّ مولودٍ يولد على الفطرة". (٢) ومعرفة داخلية تحت التكليف بعد المعرفة الفطريّة بواسطة الحجج العقليّة والنقليّة من الأنبياء عليهم السلام. (٣) ومعرفة موهوبيّة لبعض خواصّ عباد الله تعالى بالكشوف وبتصفية مرآة الروح والقلب. [...]

The true reality of God's essence can categorically never be known by any of the creatures. Thus Junayd [al-Baghdādī d. 297/909] said: 'No one knows God other than God',<sup>38</sup> and Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, may God be pleased with him, said: 'The inability to attain perception is itself perception'.<sup>39</sup> The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: 'With regard to the essence of God, you are all simpletons'.<sup>40</sup> The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, further said, although he was the master of the Prophets and the knowers of God: 'I cannot fully praise You; You are as You have praised Yourself'.<sup>41</sup> He did not say: 'I truly know God, but my tongue is unable to praise Him'. Rather what he intended (by this statement) is that: 'I neither know a praise that befits Your majesty or Your sublimity, nor am I capable of it'.<sup>42</sup> As for the saying by Abū Ḥanīfa, may God show mercy to him, in *al-Fiqh al-akbar*: 'We know God truly, but we do not worship Him in the way He deserves to be worshipped',<sup>43</sup> the intended meaning is 'the true knowledge which has been entrusted to us'.<sup>44</sup>

The knowledge of God, according to what is conceivable to the servants, is of three kinds: (1) A natural disposition to know God, which is signified in the statement by the Prophets, may God bless them all: 'Can there be doubt concerning God, the Creator of the heavens and earth?' [Q 14:10]. And our Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: 'Every newborn is born upon *fiṭra*'.<sup>45</sup> (2) Knowledge of God as required by religious obligation, following the *ma'rifa fiṭriyya*, through the means of rational proofs and scriptural evidence (brought) by the Prophets, peace be upon them. (3) Knowledge granted to some special servants of God, the Exalted, through unveilings and through the purification of the mirror of the soul and the heart.<sup>46</sup> [...]

<sup>38</sup> Junayd's words are quoted by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) in his *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God. al-Maṣṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, trans. David Burrell and Nazih Daher, Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2004, pp. 35–6.

<sup>39</sup> Abū Bakr's statement is also mentioned by Ghazālī, a few pages after the above-mentioned quote from Junayd. See *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>40</sup> A similar narration is attributed to the Prophet's companion Abū l-Dardā: 'We are all simpletons, with regard to the essence of God' (*Kullunā aḥmaq fī dhāt Allāh*). See Abū l-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī, *Akhbār al-ḥamqā wa-l-mughaffalīn*, ed. 'Abd al-Amīr Mahannā, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1410/1990, p. 26.

<sup>41</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, "Ṣalāt", 42.

<sup>42</sup> Ghazālī also mentions this hadith and offers the same interpretation, immediately after his quote from Abū Bakr which was mentioned above. See Al-Ghazālī, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, p. 42. It is very likely that Samarqandī was relying on Ghazālī's work here.

<sup>43</sup> 'We know God the Exalted truly, as God has described Himself in His Book with all His attributes, but we are unable to worship Him truly the way He deserves to be worshipped.' Abū Ḥanīfa, *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, Cairo, 1368/1949, reprinted in Mustafa ÖZ, *İmâm-ı Âzamın Beş Eseri*, Istanbul: İFAV, 2002, pp. 69–77, at p. 75.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqīda*, p. 86–7.

<sup>45</sup> Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, "Janā'iz", 92.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqīda*, p. 87.



شَكَرَ نِعَمَ اللَّهِ الظاهرة والباطنة على الكمال لا يمكن، لأنَّ كُلَّ شَكْرٍ نِعْمَةٍ جَدِيدَةٍ يستوجب شكره إلى ما يتناهي. ولا تُحْمَدُ نِعْمَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ قَلَّتْ إِلَّا بِنِعَمٍ جَدِيدَةٍ مِنَ الْقُوَّةِ وَالْعَصْمَةِ وَالزَّمَانِ وَالْمَكَانِ وَغَيْرِهَا. وَالْجَنَّةُ وَالنَّجَاةُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ بِرَحْمَتِهِ تَعَالَى وَفَضْلِهِ، لَا بِاسْتِحْقَاقِ أَعْمَالِنَا. [...]

العبادات وغيرها من الخيرات ليست بموجبة للسعادة والدخول في الجنة، والمعاصي ليست بموجبة للشقاوة والدخول في النار؛ وإنما السعادة والدخول في الجنة والشقاوة والدخول في النار برحمة الله وعدله. قال الله تعالى: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ﴾<sup>47</sup>، وقال النبي عليه السلام: ”جَفَّ الْقَلَمُ بِمَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ“. وقد حكم الله تعالى بسعادة بعض وبشقاوة بعض في الأزل لا لعلّة؛ والسعادة بالسعادة الأزليّة والشقاوة بالإشقاء الأزلي، وكلُّ ميسّرٍ لِمَا خُلِقَ لَهُ؛ قال الله: ﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ۖ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ۖ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ ۖ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ۖ﴾<sup>48</sup>.

47 سورة الأنبياء ٢١/١٠١.

48 سورة الليل ٩٢/٥-١٠.

Complete thankfulness for the outward and inward blessings of God is not possible, because every instance of thanks for a new blessing requires further thanks unendingly. A blessing from God, even if it be small, cannot be praised without incurring new blessings such as power, protection, time, space and so forth. The attainment of Heaven and salvation from punishment are only possible due to His mercy and His favour, not because we deserve them by our deeds.<sup>49</sup> [...]

Acts of worship and other good deeds do not necessarily bring about happiness [i. e. salvation] and entry into Heaven. Neither do sinful acts necessarily bring about wretchedness [i. e. damnation] and entry into Hell. Happiness and entering Heaven, as well as wretchedness and entering Hell, are only due to the mercy of God and His justice. God the Exalted said: 'Surely those to whom kindness has gone forth before from Us, they will be far removed from it [i. e. Hell]' [Q 21:101]. And the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'The pen dried up with what would be until the Day of Judgment'.<sup>50</sup> In pre-eternity God the Exalted passed judgment [with His will] on who would be happy and who would be wretched, not due to a cause [that would necessitate this]. Thus happiness is due to pre-eternal happiness and wretchedness is due to pre-eternal wretchedness. Everyone is enabled to do what they are created for. God said: 'As for him who gives and is mindful (of God), and believes in goodness, surely We will ease his way to the state of ease. But as for him who is miserly and deems himself self-sufficient, and disbelieves in goodness, surely We will ease his way to hardship' [Q 92:5–10].<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqīda*, p. 93.

<sup>50</sup> For the hadith, see Abū l-Qāsim Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī 'Abd al-Majīd al-Salafī, Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, 1404/1983, vol. 10, p. 303; vol. 11, pp. 123, 178 and 223.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Samarqandī, *al-'Aqīda*, p. 147.

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## Part III: Prophethood



## Proofs for Prophethood

Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115),  
*al-Tamhīd li-qawā'id al-tawhīd*

HÜLYA ALPER

Abū l-Muʿīn Maymūn ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Mu'tamid al-Nasafī is considered as one of the most important theologians of the Māturīdiyya after its founder. He was born in 408/1047 in Nasaf, an important cultural centre of *Mā warā' al-nahr* (Transoxiana) in Central Asia at the time. Not much is known about his life apart from the fact that his father and grandfather were also scholars of the Ḥanafī school. Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī is known for his systematic development of Māturīdī kalām, transmitting it to subsequent generations through numerous students he taught. For example, Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142) and 'Alā al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 539/1144) are among the famous scholars who studied with him. Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī died on 25 Dhū l-Ḥijja 508 (22 May 1115), most probably in Bukhara.

Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī's high position in the school of Māturīdiyya is often compared to the position of al-Bāqillānī and al-Ghazālī in the Ash'arī school of theology. His most voluminous *kalām* work *Tabṣirat al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn* ('Exposition of the Proofs in the Foundations of Religion') is one of the most important works of the Māturīdiyya theological school thanks to its systematic handling and rich content. It is widely regarded as the second most influential text in the Māturīdī kalām tradition after Māturīdī's masterpiece *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*. Any serious study of al-Māturīdī or the Māturīdī school therefore requires an examination of al-Nasafī's works. *Tabṣirat al-adilla* is especially important as a guide for interpreting the most difficult and obscure parts of *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*. Due to these reasons and most especially his contribution to the systematisation of Māturīdī kalām, Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī should be regarded as the second founder of the Māturīdī school of theology.

In addition to his role in theology, al-Nasafī contributed to *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis) and *fiqh* (Islamic law and jurisprudence). *Sharḥ Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān* ('Commentary on the Interpretations of the Qur'an'), which is attributed to 'Alā

al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, actually consists of statements by al-Nasafī.<sup>1</sup> This fact is revealed at the beginning of the commentary, as ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Samarqandī explains that he collected his teacher’s statements in a book in order to prevent them from being lost and forgotten.

*Baḥr al-kalām fī ‘aqā’id ahl al-Islām* (‘Ocean of Words on the Doctrines of the People of Islam’) is a concise theoretical work written by al-Nasafī during his youth, while his *al-Tamhīd li-qawā’id al-tawḥīd* (‘Introduction to the Principles of the Unity’) may be considered an abridgment of his *Tabṣīrat al-adilla*. In the *Tamhīd* al-Nasafī often refers to the *Tabṣīrat al-adilla*, indicating that detailed explanations are to be found there.<sup>2</sup> The *Tamhīd* summarises the beliefs of the Māturīdiyya.

A selection from the section on prophethood from the *Tamhīd* is translated here.<sup>3</sup> In this selection, al-Nasafī first aims to prove why prophethood is necessary, providing some rational proofs to this effect, and then explains miracles as specific evidence for the truthfulness of prophethood.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Hamidiye 176, fol. 1b.

<sup>2</sup> Abū l-Mu’īn al-Nasafī, *al-Tamhīd li-qawā’id al-tawḥīd*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥayy Qābil, Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1987, pp. 50, 52, 109, 113.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41–7.

[Selected text begins on the following page]



### فصل في إثبات الرسالة

ولما ثبت أنّ للعالم صانعاً حكيماً عليمًا، وكلّ جزء من أجزاء العالم ملكه، لا شريك له فيه، لما مرّ من دلائل وحدانيّته تعالى، فنقول: إنّ ورود التكليف بالإيجاب والحظر والإطلاق والمنع ممّن له الملك في ممالكه ليس ممّا يأباه العقل أو يحكم بامتناعه، إذ لكلّ مالك ولاية التصرف في مملوكه بقدر ما له من الملك. ولله تعالى في كلّ جزء من أجزاء العالم وأشخاص بني آدم ملكٌ التخليق، إذ هو الموجد له من العدم والمخترع له لا عن أصل، فكان له أن يتصرف في كلّ من ذلك على أيّ وجه شاء من وجوه التصرف. ثمّ يعلمهم ذلك بأيّ طريق شاء: إن شاء فعل ذلك بتخليق العلم لهم بذلك، وإن شاء فعل ذلك بإرسال رسولٍ إلى المكلف من جنسه أو من خلاف جنسه.

على أنّ البشر مهياً لقبول الحكمة والعلم معدّ للزيادة وبلوغ درجة الكمال عند إفادة الحكيم المرشد إياه، إذ هو ممّن يجوز عليه الجهل ولا يمتنع عليه قبول العلم بالتعليم. ثمّ إنّ صانع العالم هو الحكيم الذي لا يسفه، العليم الذي لا يجهل، وهو الموصوف بالرفقة والرحمة على عباده، فلا يمتنع منه إمداد المجبولين على النقيصة بما يوجب زوالها ويورث لهم الكمال وبلوغ الدرجة العالية في الحكمة والعلم.

وبالوقوف على هذه الجملة يعرف أنّ إرسال الرسل إلى الخلق مبشّرين ومنذرين ليبينوا للناس ما يحتاجون إليه من مصالح داريهم ويفيدوهم من أنواع الحكم ما يبلغون به درجة الكمال في حيز الإمكان دون الامتناع.

يحقّقه أنّ الأوامر الواردة من الصانع الحكيم على السنة سفرائه من رسله وأنبيائه عليهم السلام كلّها ممّا ينتفع بما أمر به المأمورون ويندفع الضرر بالامتناع عمّا نهى عنه المنهيّون. ثمّ إنّ من أمر أعمى بسلوك الطريق الجادة الموصلة له إلى مقصده الذي ينتفع ببلوغه إليه أتمّ انتفاع ونهاه أن يحيد عنه يمنة أو يسرة لما أنّ في الحيد عنه إلى ذلك وقوعه في المهاوى والمهالك، عدّ ذلك منه حكمة بل رافعة ورحمة، فمن عدّه ممتنعاً فهو الجاهل بالامتناع والإمكان.

## Chapter on Proving Prophethood

As mentioned among the proofs of the unity of God, the Exalted, it is proven that the universe has a Wise and All-Knowing Creator and that every single part of the universe belongs to Him; He has no partner. Thus, we say: the intellect does not reject or deem impossible for the one who has absolute sovereignty of his domain to impose obligations in the forms of orders, prohibitions, permissions, and preventions. For every owner has absolute authority to act freely over his property to the extent of his domain. God possesses the authority of creation in every part of the universe and over each member of humankind. For He is the one who has originated them from non-existence and created them without basing His creation on any origin. Therefore, He has the authority to act freely over each of them, exercised in any form He wishes. After that, He allows them to attain the knowledge of it<sup>4</sup> through any way He wishes: He can create in them (directly) the knowledge of it, if He wishes, or He can do this by sending to the obligated ones a messenger from their kind or other than their kind (to provide them with the knowledge).

In fact, human beings are created with the ability to attain wisdom and knowledge, as well as with the capability to increase in knowledge and reach the degree of perfection when the wise teacher explains all of this to them. Yet, it is possible for them to stay in ignorance, as well as to attain knowledge through teaching. Moreover, the Creator of the universe is the Wise who is never foolish, the All-Knowing who is never ignorant, and He is attributed with compassion and mercy towards His servants. Therefore, He is not restrained from extending His help to His servants in order to remove their shortcomings, to mature them to perfection, and to enhance them in wisdom and knowledge.

Hence, by comprehending this argument it becomes known that it is not impossible but rather plausible for God to send His messengers to creation as bearers of good tidings and warners, so that they explain to the people what they need for their good in both worlds and teach them various types of wisdom which would lead them to perfection.

What further affirms (prophethood) is that all the commandments of the Wise Creator conveyed through the tongues of His emissaries from among His messengers and His prophets, are for the benefit of those who fulfil His commandments and protect from harm those who avoid violating His prohibitions. For example, the behaviour of a person who orders a blind man to follow a straight path that leads to gaining the perfect benefits and forbids him to turn right and left in order to protect him from falling into pits and dangers is accepted as wisdom, and even as compassion and mercy. Whoever regards this as impossible is ignorant about impossibility and possibility.

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<sup>4</sup> 'It' indicates here all kinds of obligations.

ثم بعد ثبوت إمكانه في العقول نقول: لا شك أنّ فيما خلق الله تعالى من جواهر العالم ما يتعلّق به مصلحة أبدان الخلق من الأغذية التي لا بدّ لقوام مهجتهم منها، والأدوية التي بها يحصل حفظ الصّحة الثابتة وإزالة العلل العارضة، وما يحصل بتناوله التلف والهلاك بأسرع مدّة وهو السموم القاتلة. وليس في قوى العقول الوقوف على طبائعها والاطلاع على ما فيها من المصالح والمفاسد. فلو لم يرد البيان ممّن هو العالم بحقائقها لنتفع بما فيه المنفعة ونجتنب عمّا فيه المضرة، لم يكن لخلق كلّ جوهر من ذلك على ما خلقه عليه من المنفعة والمضرة حكمة، ولما أمكن للخلق الوصول إلى ما هو المخلوق سبباً لبقائهم والتمييز بينه وبين ما في الإقدام على تناوله عطّتهم وهلاكهم، والعقل لا يطلق التجربة بنفسه مع ما فيه من خطر الهلاك، فلا بدّ من بيان يرد ممّن له العلم بذلك لئلاّ يؤدي الامتناع عن البيان إلى فناء أبدان الممتحنين من غير تعلّق عاقبة حميدة بتخليقهم لما فيه من تخليق الخلق للفناء خاصّة، وهو خارج عن قضية الحكمة.

يحقّقه أنّ البشر لو أمكنهم الوصول إلى ذلك بما لهم من العقول، ثمّ كلّ منهم جبل على حبّ البقاء وطلب ما يحصل له به من الدوام، فلو لم يشرع الحكيم شرعاً ولم يضع أسباباً يكون المختصّ بها مختصّاً بما لها من الأحكام وينقطع عن الأعيان طمع من لم يفز بالاختصاص بسبب تملكه لتسارع كلّ إلى ما يميل إليه طبعه ويعرف فيه بقاؤه ويرجو الاستمتاع به. وفي ذلك وقوع المنازعة والعداوة، وذلك سبب تولّد الضغائن والأحقاد، وكلّ ذلك ممّا يحمل على التقاتل والتفاني، وفيه فناء الخلق وانقطاع نسل البشر وارتفاع جنسهم، وهم المقصودون بتخليق العالم، وفيه أيضاً تخليق الخلق للفناء خاصّة.

Now that the possibility of it [i. e. prophethood] is established by reason, we further say: there is no doubt that among the substances of the universe that God the Exalted created, there are those which are beneficial to the bodies of created beings. The food which is necessary for them to live a healthy life, and the medication which is put to use in order to both keep their health and cure diseases belong to this category. Also, there are other substances (which affect the body), such as poisonous ones that cause the immediate death and destruction of the body when eaten. In terms of the contents of this category, it is not possible for human beings to recognise their nature by intellect and to be fully aware of their benefits or harms. If there were no explanations about the nature of these substances by the person who knows the real nature of these substances, so that we can benefit from their use and avoid their harm, there would have been no wisdom behind creating any benefit or harm in them whatsoever, and there would have been no possibility for human beings to reach that which is created for their survival and to distinguish between these (beneficial substances) and those which cause their perdition and destruction. The intellect itself never uses trial and error as a method when there is a risk of death. Accordingly, a clarification by someone who has the knowledge of the matter is indispensable. This is because abstaining from explanation means that the bodies of the obliged ones [i. e. human beings] are created just for nothingness without having a praiseworthy end for their creation. And to create creation for only nothingness is against the reality of wisdom.

This clearly proves (the reality of prophethood): if people could attain this (necessary knowledge)<sup>5</sup> with their intellect (still the existence of prophethood is necessary). The nature of human beings is created with the desire to survive and with the need to perpetuate. If the Wise did not establish a law and did not specify the legal reasons that made the authorised person authorised; and if the greed of the person who does not have the legal authority to have the ownership of the commodity is not obstructed (by the enforcement of the law); then every individual would follow his natural inclination, and that which he thinks is beneficial for maintaining his survival, and hopes to be useful. And these circumstances would pave the way for the rise of conflict and antagonism culminating in animosity and hatred. All of this leads to war and mutual destruction which would bring the end of life, the extinction of human beings, and the end of their species, though they [i. e. humankind] are the purpose of the creation of the universe. Hence, this situation leads to the conclusion that humanity is created for nothingness alone.

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<sup>5</sup> The knowledge of what is beneficial for the wellbeing of their bodies and what is harmful.

وفي إرسال الرسل عليهم السلام ووضع الشرائع حصولُ العقابة الحميدة للتخليق ودفعُ لأسباب العبث والفساد فيما بين العباد. فمن أنكر الشرع وأبطل الأمر والنهي فقد سعى في إثارة كلِّ فتنة في العالم وفساد في الدنيا، وبالله العصمة عن كلِّ ضلالة.

يحقِّقه أنَّ في قوى العقول الوقوف على جمل المحاسن والمساوئ دون أعيانها، والشرف والحكمة في الوقوف على الأعيان دون الجمل. فلا بدَّ من ورود البيان ممَّن له العلم بحقيقة كلِّ فرد من أفراد تلك الجمل، أنَّه من جملة المحاسن أو من جملة القبائح، ليحمل العقل بميلانه إلى المحاسن صاحبه على مباشرته وبنفاره عن القبائح على الانتهاء عنه. لولا ذلك لم يحصل لتخليق العقل مائلاً إلى المحاسن ونافراً عن القبائح عاقبة حميدة، وذلك ليس بحكمة. يؤيِّده أنَّ العقول لما دعت إلى المحاسن ونفرت عن القبائح، ولا وقوف لها على أعيان الجنسين، لكان فيه الأمر بما لا وصول له إلى مباشرته والنهي عمَّا لا وجه له إلى الانتهاء عنه، وذلك ليس بحكمة. فلا بدَّ من البيان الوارد في حقِّ كلِّ عين، وليس ذلك إلَّا الشرع، والله الموفق.

والذي يؤيِّد هذا كله أنَّ وجوب شكر المنعم مودع في العقول لما فيه من الحسن، وحظر الكفران كذلك، وليس في قوى العقول الوقوف على قدر النعم وما يوازيها من الشكر، فلا بدَّ من الشرع الوارد ببيان ذلك ليتمكَّن العاقل من أداء ما كلَّف بأدائه والامتناع عمَّا منع من تعاطيه، والله الموفق.

Therefore, the purpose of sending messengers – may peace be upon them – and establishing religious laws is to bring a praiseworthy result for the creation and to eliminate the circumstances which would cause futility and corruption among people. He who denies the religious law and abolishes the divine commandments and prohibitions strives to stir up all forms of disorder in the universe and corruption in the world. God's protection is the shield against all kinds of error.

It is likewise affirmed that the intellect is able to know what is good and what is bad universally, but not in individual instances. However nobleness and wisdom consist of knowing individual instances, not knowing (good and evil) universally. Therefore, there is a need for a statement to be made by someone who knows the nature of each particular instance of those universals, whether it belongs to the universal good or the universal evil, so that the intellect would lead one to do good deeds because of its inclination towards good and to avoid bad deeds because of its hate of evil. Otherwise, there is no praiseworthy outcome for making the intellect be inclined towards good and dislike evil. That is not wisdom. So since the intellect leads man to fulfil the good and avoid the evil universally, and is unable to know about individual instances, there would be an order about fulfilling what is impossible to be fulfilled and a prohibition of what is impossible to be avoided. That is not wisdom. Therefore, it is necessary that a statement be made in each individual instance, and that is nothing but the divine law. Success comes only from God.

This is all justified by the fact that the necessity of being grateful to the giver of a blessing is embedded in the intellect; and so is the proscription of being ungrateful. Yet, the intellect is not capable of appreciating the value of blessings and knowing suitable ways to show its gratitude. Accordingly, there must be a divine law to explain so that those who have intellect may be able to fulfil what they are obliged to do and to avoid what they are forbidden from doing. Success comes only from God.

ووراء ذلك وجوه كثيرة يتبين بالوقوف عليها القول بصحة الرسالة، ذكرناها في كتابنا المترجم بتبصرة الأدلة. وفي هذا القدر الذي ذكرناه في هذا الكتاب كفاية لمن عقل وأنصف. ثم الرسالة وإن كانت عند كثير من المتكلمين في حيز الممكنات، وعند أصحابنا المحققين هي من مقتضيات الحكمة على ما قرّناه، فإذا جاء واحد وادّعى الرسالة في زمان جواز ورود الرسل، وهو قبل مبعث نبيّنا المصطفى محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم، إذ لم يثبت بالنصّ الوارد انختم الرسالة وانسد بابها، وادّعى هذا الجائي أنّه رسول الله كان يجب التأمل في دعواه، فإن كانت دعواه ممتنعة كدعوى زرادشت لصانعين عاجزين أو دعوى ماني بأصلين قديمين النور والظلمة، مع ما في العقول من تقرير استحالتهم كان يجب الردّ بأول ما قرعت الدعوى السماع لا الاشتغال بطلب البرهان، إذ لا دلالة تقوم على تصحيح الممتنع إلا إذا أريد بذلك تأكيد في إظهار كذبه، إذ من المعلوم الذي لا ريب فيه أنّه لا يتمكّن من إقامة الدليل، فينهتك حينئذٍ ستره ويفتضح في دعواه.

Besides these points, there are plenty of aspects that, when comprehended, demonstrate the truthfulness of prophethood, which we explained in our book titled *Tabṣīrat al-adilla* ('Exposition of the Proofs'). What we have explained here in this book is enough for those who have intellect and fair judgment. Although prophethood is considered by numerous systematic theologians to be within the category of the possible, it is considered by our companions, the verifiers, to be one of the requirements of wisdom, as we explained earlier. In the times when it was permitted to expect a messenger to arise – that is, before the sending of our Prophet, the Chosen, Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, i. e. before establishing by scriptural text that prophethood had ended and its door was shut – it was required to consider the words of individuals who had laid claim to prophethood. If their claims were impossible, considered by intellect as absurd claims – such as Zarathustra's claim of the existence of two weak gods or Mani's claim of two eternal [divine] principles: light and darkness – then these claims were required immediately to be rejected without bothering to ask for a demonstration. It is because there is no proof to affirm the impossible,<sup>6</sup> other than when the aim is to clearly prove the invalidity of their claims. For, it is known without any doubt, that it is impossible for him to provide any proof. Then he would be exposed<sup>7</sup> and disgraced in his claim.

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<sup>6</sup> i. e. these kinds of claims are considered by the intellect as impossible claims, and there is no way to prove the validity of the 'impossible'.

<sup>7</sup> Literally 'his cover will be torn', indicating that his lie will be uncovered.



وإن كانت دعواه ممكنةً لا يجب قبول قوله بدون إقامة الدليل، بخلاف ما يقوله الإباضية من الخوارج من وجوب قبول قول مدّعي الرسالة بدون إقامة الدلالة، لما أنّ تعيّن هذا المدّعي للرسالة ليس في حيز الواجبات لانعدام دلالة العقل على تعيّنه فبقي في حيز الممكنات، وربما يكون كاذباً في دعواه فكان القول بوجوب قبول قوله قولاً بوجوب قبول قول من يكون قبول قوله كفراً، وهذا خلف من القول. وإذا لم يجب قبول قوله بدون الدليل يطالب بالدليل، وهو المعجزة. وحدّها على طريقة المتكلّمين أنّها ظهور أمر بخلاف العادة في دار التكليف لإظهار صدق مدّعي النبوة مع نكول من يتحدّى به عن معارضته بمثله. وإنّما قيّد بدار التكليف، لأنّ ما يظهر من الناقض للعادة في دار الآخرة لا يكون معجزة. وإنّما قلنا: لإظهار صدق مدّعي النبوة ليقع الاحتراز به عمّا يظهر على يدي مدّعي الألوهية، إذ ظهور ذلك على يده جائز عندنا، وفيه أيضاً احتراز عمّا يظهر على يدي الولي، إذ ظهور ذلك كرامة للولي جائز عندنا. وإنّما قلنا: لإظهار صدقه، لأنّ ذلك لو ظهر لإظهار كذبه بأن قال: الدليل على صحّة نبوّتي أنّ هذا الحجر يشهد لي به، فأنطق الله تعالى الحجر بتكذيبه، لا يكون ذلك معجزةً له ولا دليلاً على صدقه، بل يكون دليلاً على كذبه في دعواه. وإنّما قلنا: مع نكول من يتحدّى به عن معارضته بمثله، لأنّ الناقض للعادة لو ظهر على يده ثمّ ظهر على يدي المتحدّى به مثله لخرج ما ظهر على يده عند المعارضة عن الدلالة، إذ مثله ظهر على يدي من يكذّبه يكون دليل صدق من يكذّبه، فيكون دليل كذبه، فيتعارض الدليلان فيسقطان، والله الموفق.

Even if his claim of prophethood were contingent, it is not required to accept his words unless he has presented proofs. This argument is contrary to the view of the Ibadis from among the Kharijites, who assert that it is required to accept claims of prophethood without given proofs. It is because, without the presence of rational proofs confirming him as the prophet,<sup>8</sup> it is not imperative to accept him as a prophet. (As it is not imperative,) it remains within the possible. Maybe he has lied about his claim of being a prophet. Stating that it is imperative to accept his claim is identical with stating that it is imperative to accept the blasphemy of accepting his claim. That is self-contradictory. Therefore, as it is not imperative to accept his words without proofs, he would be asked for proofs, and these are miracles. The definition of miracle, according to the view of the theologians, is 'the happening of an action or event, in this world of obligations,'<sup>9</sup> that is in contrast to the ordinary laws of nature, in order to prove the truthfulness of the one who claims to be a prophet, making the opponents unable to challenge him with a similar one'. It is restricted to 'this world of obligations', because contradicting ordinary laws of nature in the hereafter cannot be defined as miracle. Our statement 'in order to prove the truthfulness of the one who claims to be a prophet' is meant to exclude such acts occurring at the hands of claimants of deity. Because, according to our view, it is possible for such acts to happen at the hands of the claimants of deity. (Our statement) also excludes such acts occurring at the hands of the saints. Because, according to our view, this is possible for the saints as their *karāma* (the miracles of saints). We further said: 'in order to prove his truthfulness', for if such an incident happens in a way to prove his lie – for instance, if he said 'the proof of the truthfulness of my prophethood is that this rock will testify to it', and then God made the rock speak of his being a liar – this would be neither a miracle for him nor the proof of his truthfulness. On the contrary, this would be the proof confirming that he had lied about his claim. We also said: 'making the opponents unable to challenge him with a similar one', because if an event contradicting the custom [i. e. natural order of things] occurred at his hands and then it occurred at the hands of his challengers it would fail to be a proof. Since the same happened at the hands of (his opponent) who considered the claimant (of the prophethood) to be a liar, it would be the proof of the truthfulness of the opponent and the proof of the claimant's lie. Then, the proofs of both sides would contradict each other, and they would cease to be proof. Success comes only from God.

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<sup>8</sup> i. e. reason is unable to prove that this or that individual in particular is a true prophet.

<sup>9</sup> The author is implying this world that human beings live in, and not the hereafter.

ثمّ إذا ظهرت المعجزة على الحدّ الذي بيّنا على يدي مدّعي النبوة كانت دلالةً على صدق المدّعي. ووجه الدلالة ما تقرّر في عقولنا: أنّ الله تعالى سامع دعوى هذا المدّعي، وأنّ ما ظهر على يده خارج عن مقدور البشر بل عن مقدور جميع الخلائق، ولا قدرة عليه إلّا لله تعالى. فإذا ادّعى الرسالة ثمّ قال: آية صدق دعواي أنّ الله تعالى أرسلني أن يفعل كذا ففعل الله تعالى ذلك كان ذلك من الله تعالى تصديقاً له فيما يدّعي من الرسالة بما فعل الله تعالى من نقض العادة، فيكون ذلك كقوله له عقيب دعواه هذه: صدقت، وهذا ظاهر في المتعارف، والله الموقّ.

ثمّ قد ثبت بوقوف الناس على طبائع الجواهر وما هو غذاء منها وما هو دواء أو سمّ، مع أنّه ليس في قوى عقولهم أو حواسّهم إمكان الوقوف على ذلك، أنّهم وقفوا على ذلك باعلام خالقها على لسان من أرسله إليهم باعلام ذلك. فثبت به أنّ فيما مضى من الأزمنة كانت الرسالة ثابتةً في الجملة، ثمّ على طريق التعيين، والذي ثبت بالتواتر الموجب للعلم قطعاً وقيناً أنّه ظهرت على أيديهم المعجزات الناقضات للعادات كقلب العصا حيّة واليد بيضاء وانفلاق البحر وإبراء عيسى الأكمه والأبرص وإحياء الموتى وإخراج الناقة من الحجر وتسخير الجنّ والشياطين والطيور وغير ذلك. ثبتت نبوتهم بما اقترن بدعاويهم من هذه الآيات الخارجة عن طوق البشر، المبينة حيل المحتالين، المجاوزة قوى المخرفين، الزائدة عند شدّة التفحص والتأمل صحّة ووكادة مخالفة في ذلك الحيل والتمويهات التي تظهر عند البحث عنها وجوه بطلانها. ثمّ إنّ من كان مساوياً لهم في الدعوى والبرهان ووجه دلالة البرهان كان مساوياً لهم في صحّة الدعوى.

When the miracle happens, in accordance with the definition that we have explained, at the hands of the one who has claimed his prophethood, it proves the truthfulness of the claimant. What indicates its being a proof is our rational conclusion that God the Exalted heard the claim of this claimant and that what appeared at the hands (of the claimant) is beyond the capability of human beings and even beyond the capability of any created being. No one is able to do such a thing other than God the Exalted. And so when he claimed his prophethood and said: 'as a sign of the truthfulness of my claim that God the Exalted has sent me as a messenger, He shall let a certain incident happen', and then if God the Exalted let this certain incident happen, this would mean that God had confirmed his truthfulness in his claim of prophethood, through making that certain incident, which contradicts the customary laws of nature, occur. It is as if God verbally confirmed his claim, saying: 'you speak the truth'. This is a commonly accepted fact among people. Success comes only from God.

It is established that people know the nature of substances, which one is nutritious, which one is curative or poisonous. However, it is beyond the capability of their intellect and of their senses to know these. Accordingly, people know these because the Creator has informed them through the tongues of the messengers whom He had sent to them to provide this knowledge. Therefore, this further establishes that prophethood existed in the past generally and later appointed individually. What is passed on through *tawātur*<sup>10</sup> (recurrent transmission), which necessarily brings forth definite and certain knowledge, is that miracles, contradicting the customary laws of nature, occurred at the hands of the prophets, such as the turning of the staff into a snake, the emergence of the hand pure white, the parting of the sea,<sup>11</sup> Jesus curing the blind and leper, and reviving the dead,<sup>12</sup> the bringing forth the camel from a solid rock,<sup>13</sup> the subjugation of the jinn, devils and birds,<sup>14</sup> and so forth. The authenticity of their prophethood was confirmed by the occurrence of these miracles that are beyond the capability of human beings; these differ the tricks of fraudsters and surpass the powers of tricksters. Upon a thorough examination and contemplation, the miracles become more certain and clearly valid, whereas the tricks and deceptions become invalid. The more similar one is to them [i. e. prophets] in terms of the claim, the demonstration, and the way of proving the demonstration, the more similar he is to them in terms of the truthfulness of the claim.

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<sup>10</sup> *Tawātur* as a term indicates that an account is reported numerously by different narrators and through various chains of transmission, in a way that substantiates its authenticity. Such a report is called *mutawātir*.

<sup>11</sup> These are the miracles attributed to the Prophet Moses in the Qur'an. See Q 2:50.

<sup>12</sup> These are the miracles of the Prophet Jesus. See Q 3:49.

<sup>13</sup> This is the miracle of the Prophet of Šāliḥ. See Q 7:73.

<sup>14</sup> These are the miracles of the Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon). See Q 27:17.

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## Prophethood and Divine Wisdom

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Khabbāzī (d. 691/1292),  
*al-Hādī fī uṣūl al-dīn*

HARITH RAMLI

Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Khabbāzī (sometimes referred to as al-Khujandī) was born in 629/1231–2 in Khujand (in present day Tajikistan), around the time of the Mongol invasions of this region. He began his studies in Khwarezm, but then moved westwards to Baghdad, then Damascus, where he lived for the remainder of his life. In Damascus, he taught in a number of madrasas, but was mainly associated with the Khatuniyya, an institution which made it a requirement that all teachers were to be the highest ranking of Ḥanafī scholars. Al-Khabbāzī is mainly known for his works on Ḥanafī law, including a gloss on the *al-Hidāya* of al-Marghinānī and a work of his own on jurisprudence, *al-Mughnī fī uṣūl al-fiqh*. He himself is described in the biographical sources as ‘a pious jurist’ (*faqīh muta‘abbid*), and when he died in 691/1292 aged 72, he was buried in the sufi cemetery of Damascus.<sup>1</sup>

As al-Khabbāzī states in his introduction, *al-Hādī fī uṣūl al-dīn* (‘Guide to the Principles of Religion’) was written as an accessible theological work for students, neither too short and dense, nor too lengthy. Historically, it is located at the threshold of two interesting turning points in the history of Māturīdism: its transmission westwards beyond Central Asia due to the Mongol invasion, and just before the heavy systematising impact of Avicennan philosophy on the *kalām* schools. While some reference is made to the *Falāsifa*, like any classical *kalām* text, the main focus is addressing the threat of Mu‘tazilite theology.

The section on prophecy translated here presents an interesting example of old and new challenges coming together.<sup>2</sup> Al-Khabbāzī sides largely with the Central Asian position that the sending of prophets can justifiably be said to be a

<sup>1</sup> For his biography, see Ibn Qutlubughā, *Tāj al-tarājim fī ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyya*, ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf, Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1992, pp. 220–1; Ismā‘īl Bāshā al-Bābānī al-Baghdādī, *Hadiyyat al-‘arīfīn asmā’ al-mu‘allifīn wa-āthār al-muṣannifīn*, ed. Kilisli Rifat Bilge and İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1951, vol. 1, p. 787.

<sup>2</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Adil Bebek, Istanbul: Marmara İlahiyat Yayınları Vakfı, 2006, pp. 205–9.

necessary requisite of divine wisdom, and uses similar arguments to those made by his contemporary Abū l-Barakāt al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310)<sup>3</sup> and also to those of Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) translated in the preceding chapter of this Reader. However, al-Khabbāzī goes to greater lengths to also bring forward scriptural as well as rational proofs, reflecting a need to address not only older opponents (i. e. Muʿtazilites and the Barāhima, representing Indic traditions in Central Asia such as Buddhism), but also new challenges in the Ashʿarī-dominated milieu of Ayyubid Damascus.

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<sup>3</sup> See Abū l-Barakāt al-Nasafī, *Sharḥ al-ʿumda fī ʿaqāʾid ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamāʿa*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh Ismāʿīl, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li-l-Turāth, 2012.

[Selected text begins on the following page]



## الكلام في إثبات الرسالة

قال عامّة المتكلّمين بعثة الأنبياء جائزة. وعند المحقّقين من أصحابنا أنّها واجبة، ولا يعنون بكونها واجبة أنّها يجب على الله بإيجاب أحد أو بإيجابه على نفسه، بل يعنون أنّها متأكّدة الوجود لأنّها من مقتضيات الحكمة، فيكون عدمه من باب السفه، وهو محال على القديم. هذا كما أنّ ما علم الله وجوده يكون واجب الوجود لمّا أنّ انعدامه يوجب الجهل، وهو محال على الحكيم. وقالت البراهمة أنّها محال.

ودليل الجواز أنّ ورود التكليف بالإيجاب والحظر والإطلاق والمنع ممّن له الملك في ممالئكه ليس ممّا يأباه العقل أو يدفعه الدلائل، فله أن يتصرّف في كلّ شخص من أشخاص بني آدم بأيّ شيء شاء من وجوه التصرف منعاً كان أو إطلافاً حظراً كان أو إيجاباً، ثمّ يعلمهم ذلك إمّا بتخليق العلم لهم به أو بتخصيص بعض عباده بالعلم من جنسهم أو من خلاف جنسهم بإفهام صحيح أو بوحى صريح. يُؤيّد أنّ البشر مهيّئ لقبول الحكمة والعلم معدّ للزيادة عند إفادة الحكيم المرشد إياه<sup>4</sup>. ثمّ أنّ صانع العلم حكيم لا يسفه، عليم لا يجهل، لا يمتنع منه إمداد المجهول على النقيصة بما يوجب زوالها.

<sup>4</sup> في الأصل: أنّ البشر مهيّئ لقبول الحكمة، والعلم معدّ للزيادة عند إفادة الحكيم المرشد إياه.

### Discussion concerning the establishment of the truth of messengers (from God)

Generally, the *mutakallimūn* state that the sending of prophets is among the possible things.<sup>5</sup> According to those who have verified the truth from among our fellows,<sup>6</sup> it is necessary. But they do not mean by this that it is a necessity made incumbent upon God by another or by Himself, but that its existence is a rational certainty. This is because it is among the requisites of wisdom, while its non-existence would be a type of foolishness, which is impossible for the Eternal One. This is similar to stating that when God knows the existence of something, it follows that its existence is necessary, as its non-existence would imply ignorance, which would be impossible for the All-Wise. And the Barāhima say that it [i. e. prophethood] is impossible.<sup>7</sup>

The proof of its possibility is that for one who has dominion in his domains, the sending of obligations containing commandment, prohibition, permission and proscription is not something which is rejected by reason or refuted by proofs. It is therefore conceivable for Him [i. e. God] to dispose of the affairs of anyone from among the children of Adam in any way He wishes, be that in the form of a proscription, a permission to act, a prohibition or a commandment. Thus, He informs them of this either in the form of creating knowledge of it within them, or by specially apportioning this knowledge for some among His servants, either from the human species or not, through true insight or clear revelation. This is supported by the fact that humans are by design predisposed to receiving wisdom and knowledge, and are ready to accept more when instructed by a wise teacher.<sup>8</sup> It is also supported by the fact that the Creator of the world is All-Wise – never foolish; All-Knowing – never ignorant, and it is not impossible for Him to provide support for a being who has been created (firstly) with a deficiency, (providing him) with what is necessary to remove it.

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<sup>5</sup> That is known to human reason.

<sup>6</sup> Meaning the Mātūrīdīs.

<sup>7</sup> *Barāhima* is a term frequently found in Islamic theological texts to denote a religious tradition that accepts the existence of God but generally rejects the authority of prophets. There is disagreement in the classical sources over the degree to which prophets are rejected, with earlier texts acknowledging that they believed in the prophethood of Adam and even Abraham (and thus, also providing an explanation for the term itself, coming from *Ibrāhīmiyya*). Later texts go so far as to present them as deniers of prophecy altogether. The degree to which the term might have been inspired by the Vedic Brahminist traditions of India is unclear, and scholars continue to dispute the origins of this term. See Binyamin Abrahamov, "The Barāhima's Enigma. A Search for a New Solution", *Die Welt des Orients*, 87 (1987), pp. 72–91; Norman Calder, "The Barāhima. Literary Construct and Historical Reality", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 57/1 (1994), pp. 40–51. Calder concludes his study by pointing out that in the later period, the Barāhima simply became 'a peg for the denial of prophecy' (pp. 49–50). We can see this most clearly in the way the Barāhima are being used in this text simply as a general umbrella term for 'deniers of prophecy'.

<sup>8</sup> In the edition there is a comma after *al-ḥikma*, which we have decided to omit in our reading. With the comma the sentence would mean: 'predisposed to receiving wisdom, and knowledge can be increased when instructed by a wise teacher'.

فإن قيل: ورود التكليف منه سفيه، إذ فيه أمر بما لا منفعة للآمر ونهي عما لا مضرة للناهي، وذلك سفيه اعتباراً بالشاهد. قلنا: التسوية بين الشاهد والغائب هنا ممتنعة. أليس أن في الشاهد من فعل فعلاً لا منفعة فيه ولا لغيره فهو سفيه، والله تعالى خلق أشياء لا ينتفع بها أحد البتة كالأجزاء الكامنة في تخوم الأرض والجبال؟ فإذا افترق الحال بين الشاهد والغائب في الفعل فكذا في الأمر والنهي.

ثم في بعثة الأنبياء عليهم السلام فوائد كثيرة نذكرها على التفصيل.

أحدها أن فيها تأكيد دليل العقل بدليل النقل وقطع عذر المكلف على ما قال تعالى: ﴿لَيَلَّا يَكُونُ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ﴾<sup>9</sup>. وقال: ﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّا أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُرْسِلَتْ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا﴾<sup>10</sup>.

الثاني: أن الله تعالى خلق الخلق محتاجين إلى الغذاء في البقاء وإلى الدواء للشفاء ولحفظ صحة وإزالة العلة العارضة وخلق من جنسها السموم القاتلة، والعقل لا يقف عليها، والتجربة لا يكفي لمعرفة إلا بعد الأدوار ومع ذلك فيها خطر، وفي بعثة الأنبياء معرفة طبائعها من غير خطر.

الثالث: أنه لو فرض كيفية العبادة إلى الخلق ربما أتى كل طائفة بوضع خاص ثم أخذوا يتعصبون لها فيفضي إلى الفتن.

الرابع: أن الذي يفعله الإنسان بمقتضى عقله كالفعل المعتاد والعادة لا يكون عبادة. فأما الائتمار لمن كان معظماً في قلبه على لائمه<sup>11</sup> كان إتيانه به لمحض العبادة، ولذلك ورد الأمر بالأفعال الغريبة في الحج متفاوتة.

<sup>9</sup> سورة النساء ١٦٥/٤.

<sup>10</sup> سورة طه ١٣٤/٢٠.

<sup>11</sup> في الأصل: لميته.

If it is said: The sending of obligations from Him is foolish, since contained within them are commandments to perform actions which do not benefit the one who commands, or prohibitions from performing actions which do not harm the one who prohibits. And this is clear foolishness by analogy with the seen world. We say that drawing comparisons between the seen<sup>12</sup> and unseen world<sup>13</sup> here is not acceptable. Is it not the case that there is no one in the seen world that acts in a way that does not benefit him or others? However, God has created things which do not benefit anyone at all, such as parts hidden beneath the surface of the Earth and mountains. Therefore, if the situation between the seen and unseen world can differ in the case of actions, then it can also differ in the case of commandments and prohibitions.

In the sending of prophets – peace be upon them –, there are many benefits, which we shall now mention in detail.

The first: Through it there is a confirmation of rational proof with the proof of revelation which conclusively nullifies any excuse made by the one who comes under ethical-religious obligations. This is in accordance with the statement of the Exalted ‘so that there will not be for humankind a claim against God after the (sending) of messengers’ [Q 4:165]. And He has also stated: ‘If We had destroyed them with a punishment before him [i. e. the messenger], then they would have said, “Why did You not send us a messenger?”’ [Q 20:134].

The second: God the Exalted created humans needing food for survival and medicine for healing, maintaining good health and removing sickness, and also created from the same genus other things that contain deadly poison. Human reason cannot intuitively know what these are, nor can accumulated experience bring about this knowledge except after lengthy periods – and notwithstanding this [i. e. the knowledge obtained] there is still danger in it. Whereas in the sending of prophets, knowledge of their different natures can be obtained, without any danger involved.

The third: If deciding the mode of worship was an obligation left to humans, then each group might come up with its own distinct religious practice and would begin to become fanatical about this, and this would lead to dissension.

The fourth: Human actions which are based on reason alone, such as habitual actions or habits, do not constitute worship. But when a person carries out the command of one whom the heart glorifies – in spite of (reason’s) rebuking of it – then this is pure worship.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, instructions have been sent down for the performance of various strange acts in the Hajj (pilgrimage).

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<sup>12</sup> The mundane world.

<sup>13</sup> The divine.

<sup>14</sup> Or, alternatively: ‘But carrying out the command of someone who is greatly honoured in one’s heart [i. e. the Prophet], notwithstanding his illiteracy (*ummiyyatihi*), is pure worship’. In either reading, the idea conveyed is that worship purely based on rational reasons alone diminishes the aim of worship, which is obedience.

[الخامس]: والكامل نادر والأسرار الإلهية عزيزة، فلا بدّ من بعثة الأنبياء وإنزال الكتب عليهم إيصلاً لكلّ مساعد إلى منتهى كماله الممكن له.

السادس: أنّ الحاجة ماسّة إلى الصناعات النافعة كالنسج والخياطة والبناء وصناعة النجر والزرع، كما قال الله تعالى: ﴿وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَكُمْ﴾<sup>15</sup>، وقال تعالى: ﴿وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ﴾<sup>16</sup>، فوجب بعثة الأنبياء لتعليمها.

الثامن: أنّ شكر المنعم حسنٌ وكفرانه قبيحٌ في العقل، والعقول قاصرة عن معرفة كمّية الشكر وكيفيّته وجنس الشكر ووقته، فلا بدّ من بيانٍ سمعيٍّ يردّ بذلك كلّ، إذ الشكر واجب، ولولا البيان لكان ذلك تكليف ما ليس في الوسع، وإنّه لا يجوز.

فثبت بهذه الوجوه أنّ إرسال الرسل مبشّرين ومنذرين ومبينين للناس ما يحتاجون إليه من مصالح داريهم حكمة. وبهذا يبطل أيضاً قول البراهمة القائلين بوقوع الغنية بالعقل، لأنّ بالعقل إن كان يمكن الوقوف على الواجب والممتنع ولكن لا يمكن الوقوف به على الممكن على أنّه إن كان ممكناً، لكن لا يكون ذلك إلّا بإداب الفكرة والنظر الدائم والبحث الكامل، وفيه مشقّة عظيمة.

تحقّقه: أنّ إعطاء ما زاد على الكفاية يعدّ إكراماً وإفضالاً وإنعاماً، فلا يبعد ذلك من ذي الفضل العظيم والمنعم الكريم. ألا ترى أنّ الله تعالى خلق للخلق عينيّن ويديّن وأذنيّن وإن كان المقصود يحصل بواحد؟

<sup>15</sup> سورة الأنبياء ٨٠/٢١.

<sup>16</sup> سورة هود ٣٧/١١.

[The fifth]: [The existence of] the perfect person is rare<sup>17</sup> and the divine secrets are precious. Therefore, prophets and revealed scriptures must be sent in order to give everyone what will assist them to attain the extent of perfection possible for them.

The sixth: (Human) need requires the existence of useful crafts such as weaving, tailoring, building, carpentry and agriculture, as in the statement of God the Exalted: 'And We taught him the craft of making garments (of mail) for you' [Q 21:80]. And the Exalted also said: 'Build a ship' [Q 11:37]. Thus, the sending of prophets is necessary to teach (humankind) about this.

[The seventh benefit is missing from the text]

The eighth: Human reason intuitively knows that expressing gratitude to the Benefactor is good, and that ingratitude to Him is repugnant. Human intellects are not capable of knowing how much gratitude is needed, how to express gratitude, what type of gratitude should be expressed, and when gratitude should be expressed. Therefore, clear verbal guidance that details all of this is necessary, as gratitude is obligatory. If there was no such guidance, then this would be the imposing of a religious obligation that the person is not capable of fulfilling, and this is not acceptable [for God].

Based on these considerations, it has been established that the sending of messengers to promise, warn, and to demonstrate to people what they require for their benefit in both worlds, is an act of wisdom. And with this, the arguments of the Barāhima who say human intellect alone is sufficient are dismissed. This is because the intellect can only know conclusively what is logically necessary or impossible, not what is possible. Even if we were to grant that this was possible, it would not be achieved except after the lengthy deliberation, constant meditation, and complete investigation, which is extremely difficult.

The truth of the matter is that the granting of something beyond what is sufficient is an act of honour, generosity and bounty, and therefore this is not inconceivable for the Possessor of Great Generosity and the Most Noble Provider. Do you not see that God the Exalted has created humans with two eyes, two hands, and two ears, when one of each would have been sufficient for what they were intended for?

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<sup>17</sup> In other words, nobody is perfect, when left to their own human resources.

وإذا ثبت أنّ بعثة الأنبياء جائزة فإذا جاء واحد وادّعى الرسالة في زمان جواز ورود الرسول، وهو قبل مبعث نبيّنا عليه السلام، لا يجب قبول قوله بدون المعجزة، لأنّه خبر الواحد وأنّه يحتمل الصدق والكذب، ولأنّ وجوب قبول قوله يؤدّي إلى قبول قول من يكون قبول قوله كفراً.

وحدها على طريقة المتكلمين أنّها أمر يظهر بخلاف العادة في دار التكليف لإظهار صدق مدّعي النبوة مع نكول من يتحدّى به عن معارضته بمثله.

وإنّما قيّد بدار التكليف، لأنّ ما كان في الآخرة من خلاف العادة لا يكون معجزةً. وبإظهار صدق مدّعي النبوة احترازاً عمّا ظهر على يد الوليّ والمثالّة إذ ظهور خلاف العادة على يد المثالّة جائز دون المتنبي. والفرق أنّ ظهور على يد المتنبي يوجب انسداد معرفة النبي عليه السلام. فأما ظهوره على يد المثالّة لا يوجب انسداد باب معرفة الإله، لأنّ كلّ عاقل يعرف أنّ الآدمي المشتمل على دلالات الحدوث وسمات القصور لا يكون إلهاً وإنّ رؤي ألف خارق العادة. وبإظهار صدقه، لأنّه لو ظهر على إظهار كذبه لا يكون معجزةً كما لو ادّعى المتنبي أنّ معجزتي نطق هذه الشجرة فأنطقها الله بتكذيبه لا يكون معجزةً. وبنكول من يتحدّى به عن معارضته، لأنّها يخرج عند المعارضة عن الدلالة.

Since it is established that the sending of prophets is a possibility, then if a claimant to prophethood came at the time in which it is possible for messengers to be sent, which is before the appearance of our Prophet – peace be upon him – then it would not have been necessary to accept his claim without (the manifestation of) a miracle. This is because it is a single person's claim which could be either true or false. Therefore, if it were necessary to accept such a claim, then it would be tantamount to making it necessary to accept a person's claim the acceptance of which could be *kufṛ*.<sup>18</sup>

The definition of a 'miracle', according to the method of the *mutakallimūn*, is that it is an occurrence which occurs outside of normal occurrences in the realm of religious obligation<sup>19</sup> in order to manifest the truth of one who claims prophethood together with the inability of the one who contests it to bring forth something comparable.

This definition restricts it to 'the realm of religious obligation', because disruptions of normal occurrences in the Hereafter are not miracles. It is defined as 'the truth claim of a claimant to prophethood' in order to distinguish it from (disruptions of normal occurrences) that occur at the hands of saints and those who claim divinity. This is because disruptions of the norm in the hands of those who claim divinity – unlike those who falsely claim prophethood – are (also) possible. The difference between the two being that their manifestation at the hands of a false claimant of prophethood entails necessarily that the path to knowing whether a person is a true prophet – peace be upon him – is blocked. However, in the case of the manifestation (of a disruption of normal occurrence) at the hands of a claimant to divinity, the path to knowing divinity is not blocked for human intuition, as any person with intellect will know that a human with all the signs of contingency and characteristics of deficiency cannot be a god, even if a thousand disruptions of normal occurrence were shown. It is defined by 'to manifest the truth (of one who claims prophethood)', because if it were the case that the disruption of normal occurrence were to manifest the prophet's falsehood, then it could not be a miracle. For example, if a claimant to prophethood were to say: 'My miracle would be that this tree would talk', but then God made the tree speak of his falsehood, then it would not be a miracle. It is defined by 'the inability of the one who contests it (to bring forth something comparable)', because this makes the challenge void of proof.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> In other words, the evidence for belief in a claim to prophecy would be insufficient without additional supporting evidence. The term used here (*khabar wāḥid*) is a term deriving from the field of Hadīth, and refers to a narration with only a single chain of narrators to support it. Most theological schools reject the idea that a matter of belief (as opposed to a matter of law and practice) could be based on such narrations.

<sup>19</sup> That is in this world.

<sup>20</sup> In other words, because the miracle dispossesses him – when he is unable to bring forward a comparable event – of a proof.



ووجه دلالة المعجزة على صدق الآتي بها أننا نعلم يقيناً أنّ الله تعالى سامع لدعواه وأنّ ما ظهر على يده خارج عن مقدور جميع البشر. فإذا ادّعى الرسالة ثمّ قال: "إلهي إن كنت صادقاً في دعوى الرسالة فسودّ وجه القمر" مثلاً، فسودّ عقيب سؤاله علمنا بضرورة أنّه صدّقه في دعواه.

فإن قيل: لم لا يجوز إظهار المعجزة على يد المتنبيّ إضلالاً للخلق ويجوز منه خلق الضلال فيهم وترك أصلحهم عندهم؟ قلنا: لوجه.

أحدها: أنّ الله تعالى قادر على التفرقة بين الصادق والكاذب بطريق الدلالة كما هو قادر عليها بطريق الضرورة. فلو ظهرت على يد الكاذب لانسدّ طريق معرفة الرسول بطريق الدلالة، وفيه تعجيز الله تعالى.

والثاني: أنّه لو ظهرت على يد الكاذب لكان تكليف الخلق بتصديق الأنبياء تكليف ما لا يطاق، وإنّه غير جائز أو غير ثابت بالنصّ أو الإجماع.

والثالث: لا نسلم بأنّ ذلك مقدور. فإنّ المعجزة علّم صدق الآتي بها فيستحيل وجودها مع الكاذب، وهذا لأنّ المعجزة المقرونة بالتحدي نازل منزلة قوله: "صدقت أنت رسولي". وعلامة الكاذب أنّه ما قيل له ذلك واستحال الجمع بين التصديق وعدمه. نعم، خلق خرق العادة مقدور على حياله، فأما عند تضمّنه بطلان دلالته على صدق الصادق فلا. وهذا كخلق السواد في محلّ مقدورٍ على انفراده، فأما على تضمّنه الجمع بين الضدين فلا.

The way in which the prophetic miracle can prove the truth of the one bringing it<sup>21</sup> is this: that we know with certainty that God the Exalted can hear his call, and that what manifests at his hands is beyond the power of all humans. Thus, when he makes the claim to prophethood, he would say, for example: 'My God, if I am true in my claim to prophethood, then darken the face of the moon'. And when the moon is immediately darkened in response to his call, we then know necessarily that (God) has verified his claim.

If it was said: Why is it not possible, according to your view, that a false claimant to prophethood performs miracles and leads the people to error, while it is possible that error is created by God within them and that that which is best for them is abandoned?

We say: For many reasons, one among them being that it is possible for God the Exalted to create a means to distinguish between a true prophet and a false prophet through the method of evidenced reasoning, just as it is possible for Him to create one through intuitive knowledge. But if the miracle were to manifest at the hands of a false prophet, then the path to knowing the prophet through evidenced reasoning would be closed. This would be tantamount to saying that the capability of God the Exalted is limited.

Secondly, if miracles were to be manifested at the hands of a false claimant to prophethood, then the obligation on humans to testify to the truth of prophets would be an obligation beyond capacity.<sup>22</sup> This is not possible by reason, nor is it established by scriptural text or communal consensus.

Thirdly, we do not accept that this is conceivable, as the prophetic miracle is the mark of the truth of the one who performs it, and therefore, its concurrent existence at the hands of the liar is logically impossible. This is because a prophetic miracle that poses a challenge<sup>23</sup> is equivalent to (God) saying: 'You have spoken the truth. You are My messenger', whereas this is not said to a liar, and the coexistence of the verification of a statement and the absence of such verification is logically impossible. Yes, (the false prophet is able to) create a 'disruption of habit' by means of his tricks, but this does not mean that his false evidence should be included in the same category as the truth of a true prophet. This is comparable to the creation of blackness in a place, in which case its removal is logically possible, but not the coexistence of the two opposites (blackness and its absence).

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<sup>21</sup> That is the prophet.

<sup>22</sup> An obligation which they did not have the means to fulfil.

<sup>23</sup> To the denier of the claim.

والرابع: لو سلم أنّه مقدور لكنّه غير واقع بمنزلة خلاف معلوم الله تعالى كيلا يؤدّي إلى التباس الحقّ بالباطل وإبطال الأدلّة وتعجيز الباري تعالى عن إلزام الحجّة وخلوّ بعثة الأنبياء عن الفائدة.

ونسبة الإضلال إلى الله تعالى على وجه يكون حجّة وحكمة عند اختيار المكلف، ذلك جائز دون ما يكون عبثاً وسفهاً.  
والله الهادي.

Fourthly, if we were to accept this as possible, it would still not occur, as this would conflict with the knowledge of God the Exalted, leading to a confusion between truth and falsehood; the nullification of the proofs (of prophethood); the suggestion that the Creator the Exalted is limited in His ability to make proof conclusive; the removal of any benefit from the sending of prophets.

The attribution of misguidance to God the Exalted insofar as it leads to a proof<sup>24</sup> or wise benefit for a morally responsible person confronted with a moral choice, this is permissible. But anything beyond this<sup>25</sup> would be pointless and foolish.

And God is the Guide.

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<sup>24</sup> A proof against someone, *ḥujja*.

<sup>25</sup> Or misguidance for any other purpose.

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## Part IV: Faith, Knowledge and Acts



## Human Nature and Knowledge of God

Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*

KAYHAN ÖZAYKAL

The following is a translation of selected passages from al-Māturīdī's Qur'anic commentary, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān* ('Interpretations of the Qur'an').<sup>1</sup> These passages cover verses 30–32 of Sūrat al-Baqara, which recount the story of Adam's creation and the remarkable response from the angels that this event provoked.

Here, al-Māturīdī's commentary (*tafsīr*) articulates the importance of knowledge to the stations of prophethood and humanity, both represented by the first human. A contrast drawn between the essences of light, fire and earth – from which the angels, jinn and humans are respectively created – concerning the attainment of knowledge reveals God as the ultimate bestower of true understanding. The commentary then addresses a subject of great controversy in the early period of Islam: deferment of judgement regarding the fate of a believer who committed a major sin. The passages here exhibit al-Māturīdī's wish to achieve the most reasonable and balanced theological position in relation to the metaphysics of human action.

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<sup>1</sup> This translation is based on Ahmet Vanlıoğlu and Bekir Topaloğlu's edition of al-Māturīdī's *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, Istanbul: Dār al-Mizān, 2005, vol. 1, pp. 71–82. Other editions of his commentary are *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm. Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunna*, ed. Fāṭima Yūsuf al-Khiyamī [or al-Khimī], Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla Nāshirūn, 1425/2004 (5 vols.), and *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunna. Tafsīr al-Māturīdī*, ed. Majdī Bāsalūm, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2005 (10 vols.). To translate the following passages, Topaloğlu's Turkish translation was also consulted (*Te'vīlâtü'l-Kur'ân Tercümesi*, ed. Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, Istanbul: Ensar, 2015, vol. 1).



وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ [سورة البقرة ٣٠/٢]

{قال الشيخ رضي الله عنه:} <sup>2</sup>القول فيما يتوجه إليه [الكلام] مما تضمن قصّة آدم عليه السلام من سورة البقرة والكشف عمّا قال فيها أهل التفسير [هو ما يقال فيه] من غير شهادة لأحد ممّا لإصابة جميع ما فيه من الحكمة أو القطع على تحقيق شيء، و [من غير الحكم بما] وجهوا إليه بالإحاطة. ولكن الغالب ممّا يحتمله تدير البشر، ويبلغه مبلغ علمنا ممّا يجوز أن يوصف به أهل المحنة. [...]

{قال:} ومعنى قوله: ﴿إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾، أنّ الله قد كان أخبرهم عن الذين يفسدون، ولم يكن أعلمهم ما فيهم من الرسل والأخبار، فهو يعلم ما لا يعلمون من الأخبار فيهم، ولذلك ذكرهم عند سؤال الأنبياء بما أعلمهم من عظيم امتنانه على آدم أن جعله بمعنى نبيّ إلى الملائكة بما علّمه الأسماء. ولم يكن بلغ توهمهم أنّ في البشر ما يحتاج [إليه] المخلوقون من النور الذي هو سبب رفع الأستار عن الأشياء وجلاء الأشياء به، ثم يحتاجون في اقتباس العلم إلى من هو من جوهر التراب والماء الذي هو أصل الستر والظلمة. فأراهم الله بذلك ليعلموا أنّ ليس طريق المعرفة والعلم بالأشياء الخلقية، ولكن لطف الله وامتنانه. ولا قوة إلا بالله. [...]

ثم تكلموا في معنى ذلك. فمنهم من يقول: ظنّوا أنّهم أكرم الخلق على الله، وإنّهم لا يفضل أحداً عليهم. ومنهم من يقول: ظنّوا أنّهم أعلم من جميع من يخلق من جوهر النار أو التراب، من حيث ذكرت من جوهرهم، أو لعظم عبادتهم لله، وعلمهم بأنّ في الجنّ والأنس عصاة. فلهذا امتحنهم بالعلم ثم بالسجود لإظهار علوّ البشر وشرفه وعظم ما أكرموا [به] من العلم. ومنهم من قال بقوله: ﴿وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ﴾. [...]

<sup>2</sup> Words between curly brackets in the Vanhoğlu-Topaloğlu edition of *Ta'wīlāt* (vol.1) indicate scribal additions to the text, rather than the words or thoughts of al-Māturīdī. The same applies in the English translation below. Square brackets in the Arabic denote redactions by editors Vanhoğlu and Topaloğlu and, in the case of ellipses, passages omitted by the translator.

And when your Lord said to the angels, 'I will make a successor on the earth. They said, 'Will You make one who will cause corruption there and shed blood, when we glorify You with praise and proclaim Your holiness?' God said, 'I know that which you do not know' [Q 2:30].

{The Shaykh [al-Māturīdī], may God be pleased with him, said:} [In regard to]<sup>3</sup> forging an opinion about this [divine discourse], which includes the story of Adam, peace be upon him, in Sūrat al-Baqara, and unveiling what the Qur'anic commentators have said about it; none of us can testify that all the wisdom [contained here has been attained] accurately, or that a particular thing has been verified with certainty [by us]. Also, none of us can decide that [the scholars] have understood and interpreted it with full comprehension. Rather, the most the human can comprehend and the furthest we can reach is limited to the amount of knowledge that can be attributed to those who are tested [by God] [...]

{[The Shaykh] said:} The meaning of His statement, '**I know that which you do not know**', is that God had already informed them [i.e. the angels] about those who will cause corruption, but had not yet notified them of the messengers and virtuous among them [i.e. humanity]. Indeed, God knew things they did not know about the virtuous ones among them. For this reason, when He asked [the angels] to report [the names] to Him; He made them aware of the great blessings bestowed on Adam, to whom He taught the names, transferring him in a sense to the status of a prophet to the angels. [The angels] had not imagined that those created from light, which is a cause of lifting away the veils from things and illuminating them, could be in need of something in humans. And yet, in order to acquire knowledge, [the angels] were in need of one made from the substance of earth and water, which is the source of veiling and darkness. Thus, God showed them this to have them know that the path to recognising and knowing things is not (based on) natural qualities, but rather the kindness and grace of God. And there is no power except with God. [...]

[The scholars] speculated on the meaning of this.<sup>4</sup> Some of them said: They [i.e. the angels] supposed they were the noblest of creation to God, and that He would favour none over them. And some of the [scholars] said: [The angels objected because they] supposed they were more learned than all those created from the substance of fire or earth, in view of what has been mentioned above about their respective substances; or due to the greatness of their worship of God, and their knowledge that among the jinn and humans were rebellious ones. For this reason, [God] tested them [i.e. the angels], first with knowledge, and then with prostration [to Adam], so as to disclose the high status and honour of humankind and the greatness of the knowledge granted to them. Finally, some of the scholars explained this [objection] with God's statement [quoting the angels]: '**When we glorify You with praise and proclaim Your holiness?**' [...]

<sup>3</sup> Words between square brackets in the English translation are explanatory additions by the translator not found in the Arabic original.

<sup>4</sup> That is, the objection of the angels toward the creation of Adam.

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ [سورة البقرة ٢/٣١]

وقوله: ﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ﴾ يحتمل أن يكون عَلَّمَ: ألهم. ويحتمل أن يكون عَلَّمَ بإرسال ملك من غير الذين امتحنوا به. وفي ذلك تثبيت أحد وجهين: إما أن يكون العلم بأشياء حقيقة ضرورة، يقع عند النظر في الأسباب التي هي أدلة وقوعه عند التأمل فيها، نحو وقوع الدرك بالبصر عند النظر وفتح العين؛ وإما أن كان الله تعالى خلق فعل التعلم الذي يعلم المرء فيما يضاف فيه إلى الله تعالى أنه عَلَّمَ. وكذا قوله: ﴿عَلَّمَهُ النَّبِيَّانَ﴾<sup>5</sup>، وكذا قوله: ﴿وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشَّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ﴾<sup>6</sup>. ولا يحتمل هذه الأسباب لما كانت له كلها، ولم يكن تعلم حقيقة ليؤذنها، وكذلك قول الملائكة: ﴿لَا عَلِمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا﴾<sup>4</sup>. والله الموفق.

وقوله: ﴿أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ﴾، ظاهره أمر، ولكنّه يحتمل التوعّد والمعاتبة على ما بيّنا، وذلك في القرآن كثير. وإن كان في الحقيقة أمراً ففيه دلالة جواز الأمر فيما لا يعلمه المأمور، إذا كان بحيث يحتمل العلم به إلى ذي العلم، يتبيّن له إذا طلب واستوجب رتبة التعلم والبحث. ويحتمل أن يكونوا نبّهوا حتّى لا يسبق إليهم - عند إعلام آدم - أن ذلك من حيث يدركونه لو تكلفوا، أو أراد أن يريهم آيةً عجيبةً تدلّ على نبوّته، ذكرهم عجزهم عن ذلك، وألزمهم الخضوع لآدم عليه السلام في إفادة ذلك العلم به، كما قال عز وجل: ﴿وَمَا تِلْكَ يَمِينُكَ يَا مُوسَى﴾<sup>7</sup>، ذكره أولاً حاله وحال عصاه، ليعلم [أنّ] ما أراه ممّا في يده من آية نبوّته، على نبينا وعليه السلام.

<sup>5</sup> سورة يس ٦٩/٣٦.

<sup>6</sup> سورة البقرة ٣٢/٢.

<sup>7</sup> سورة طه ١٧/٢٠.

**And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, and asked them: Tell me the names of these, if you are truthful [Q 2:31].**<sup>8</sup>

As for His statement, ‘**And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels**’, it is possible that the word ‘He taught’ here means ‘He inspired’. And it is also possible that ‘He taught’ by sending an angel from other than those who were tested with this. Here, one of two possible forms [of knowledge] is established: [firstly] either the knowledge of things is real and necessary, taking place through the causes [of knowledge], which are proofs for the occurrence of knowledge when they are pondered, as in the occurrence of comprehension by sight when the eye is open and observing; or [secondly, the knowledge occurred] by God the Exalted creating the act of learning, so the person knows that it is He who is the One that is teaching, where the teaching belongs to God.<sup>9</sup> Such is the case in His statement: ‘[The Merciful] taught him the way of communication’ [Q 55:4]; and His statement: ‘We did not teach [Muḥammad] poetry; he had no need for that’ [Q 36:69]. This type of teaching does not require the causes of knowledge, since these [causes] are all with God; and it is not a reality that was announced to them [i. e. the angels]. Such is the meaning of the angels’ statement: ‘We have no knowledge except that which You have taught us’ [Q 2:32]. And God is the Granter of Success.

His statement, ‘**Tell me the names of these**’, appears literally to be a command. Yet there is the possibility that it is a threat or a reprimand, as we have explained. This occurs in the Qur’an often. If the statement is actually a command, it is an indication of the permissibility for a command to be given to an individual regarding what he does not know about, [though only] when the [required] knowledge is tied to one who knows it, and this knowledge would be clear to him<sup>10</sup> upon his asking and requesting it from the learned, so that he too can achieve the level of knowledge and learning. It is also possible that the (angels) were warned [with this divine statement] – when Adam informed them [of the names of things] – so they would not fall into the suspicion that the knowledge was of a type they could find, were they to make an effort to do so. Alternatively, [God] wanted to show them a miraculous sign as proof of his [i. e. Adam’s] prophecy. [God] thus reminded them of their inability to do this [i. e. state the names of things], and obligated them to submit to Adam, peace be upon him, in recognition of his knowledge, just as He, the Mighty and Sublime, said: ‘What is that in your right hand, O Moses?’ [Q 20:17].<sup>11</sup> Here, God first reminded him [i. e. Moses] of his own condition and the condition of his staff, until Moses learned that what (God) showed him in his hand was a sign of his prophecy. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet [Muḥammad] and upon him [i. e. Moses].

<sup>8</sup> The last clause of this verse is also more idiomatically translatable as ‘if you truly [think you can]’: M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur’an*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Khayyāmī’s edition, *Ta’wīlāt Ahl al-Sunna*, records the final عَلَّمَ as عَلَّمَ, which changes the last clause to ‘where the knowledge belongs to God’.

<sup>10</sup> That is, the one addressed with the command.

<sup>11</sup> Succeeding verses Q 20:18–23 are required here to make sense of the meaning: [Moses

وقوله: ﴿إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ في المعاني التي ذكرت، أو إن كنتم - من خلقتكم - موصوفين بالصدق، أو على تحذير القول بلا علم، وكأنه قال: واصدقوا واحذروا القول بالجهل. وفي ذلك أنهم لم يتكلفوا بالقول في شيء، ولم يعلمهم الله تعالى. [...]

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ [سورة البقرة ٣٢/٢]

وقول الملائكة: ﴿قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾ يشبه أن يكون السابق إلى وهمهم معنى أو خطر فعل مما كان بالله خرج من أن يعقلوا حكمته إما بما لم يبلغهم العلم بها، أو يخطر ببالهم أنه تعالى كيف يأمرهم وهو يعلم أنهم لا يعلمون بها، أو خطر ببالهم من غير تحقيق ذلك، ولكن على ما يبلى به الأخيار، كقوله: ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى﴾<sup>12</sup> الآية؛ أو كما لا يخلو به الممتحن من الخواطر التي تبلغ المحنة بهم المجاهدة بها في دفعها، وإن لم يكن لهم بما يخطر ببالهم صنع. فقالوا: سبحانك، نزهوه عما خطر ببالهم وسبق إلى وهمهم، ووصفوه بأنه عليم لا يخفى عليه شيء، حكيم لا يخطئ في شيء، ولا يخرج فعله عن الحكمة. وبالله التوفيق والعصمة.

And His statement, **'If you are truthful'**, refers to the issues mentioned [above], or [it means] that 'if you are – by virtue of your *nature*<sup>13</sup> – endowed with truthfulness'; or it further indicates a warning about speaking without knowledge. It is as if He said: Be truthful and beware of ignorant speech. There is also an indication that they [i. e. the angels] were not responsible for saying anything, and God the Exalted had not taught them knowledge [in the matter concerned]. [...]

**They said: Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except that which You have taught us. Indeed, You are the Knower, the Wise [Q 2:32].**

The statement of the angels, **'Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except that which You have taught us. Indeed, You are the Knower, the Wise'**, seems to mean that their minds had been driven by suspicion or there preyed on their minds an act belonging to God,<sup>14</sup> the wisdom of which went beyond their understanding, either because no knowledge of it had reached them, or because they questioned how He the Exalted could command them [to do something] when He knew they had no knowledge of [how to do] it. Or [the suspicion] came to their minds [like a delusion] without any verification. Yet it was a test for the virtuous, as in His statement: 'We have not sent any messenger or prophet before you, but that when he wished... [Q 22:52]'.<sup>15</sup> It may also mean that those who are tested [by God] are not without evil thoughts, which bring [the tested one] such a trial that it requires great effort to dispel them, even though they have no power over what comes to their minds. So they [i. e. the angels] stated: 'We glorify You'. They professed God to be above all [the inappropriate attributes] that had come to their minds and that they had suspected groundlessly; and they described Him as Knowing, nothing is hidden to Him; and Wise, nothing He does is mistaken, and no action of His is unwise. Success and protection are by God.

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said] 'It is my staff, upon which I lean; by which I bring down leaves for my sheep; and for which I also have other uses'. God said, 'Throw it down, O Moses'. So he threw it down, and suddenly it was a fast-moving snake. He said, 'Pick it up, and do not be scared: We shall return it to its previous form. And now place your hand on your side; it will come out white with no harm – another sign. We do this so as to show you [some] of Our great signs'.

<sup>13</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>14</sup> This sentence appears to offer two different possibilities concerning the angels' thoughts; that they were either plagued with suspicion or merely puzzled by some divine act (due to their lack of knowledge or understanding). However, an alternative reading instead makes the 'or' refer to two possibilities regarding the divine mind. Thus, the angels' statement "intimates they had first suspected there was in God some idea or intention to do something".

<sup>15</sup> It appears al-Māturīdī here expects the reader to know the full verse: 'We have not sent any messenger or prophet before you, except that when he wished, Satan threw [in something opposed] to what he wished for. But God cancels what Satan throws in, and then confirms His message. God is the Knowing, the Wise.'

وفي الآية منع التكلم في الشيء إلا بعد العلم به، والفرع إلى الله عن القول به إلا بعلم، وهذا هو الحق الذي يلزم كل من عرف الله. وبه أمر تعالى نبيه عليه الصلاة والسلام، فقال: ﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ﴾<sup>16</sup>، الآية. وسئل أبو حنيفة رضي الله عنه عن الإرجاء ما بدؤه؟ فقال: فعل الملائكة، إذ سئلوا عن أمر لم يعلموا [ف]فوضوا ذلك إلى الله تعالى.

ومعنى الإرجاء نوعان. أحدهما محمود، وهو إرجاء أصحاب الكبائر ليحكم الله تعالى فيهم بما يشاء، ولا يُنزلهم ناراً ولا جنّة، لقوله تعالى: ﴿لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾<sup>17</sup>. والإرجاء المذموم هو الجبر، [وهو] أن يُرجى الأفعال إلى الله، لا يجعل للعبد فيه فعلاً ولا تدبير شيء من ذلك.

<sup>16</sup> سورة الإسراء ١٧/٣٦.

<sup>17</sup> سورة النساء ٤/٤٨.

In this verse is an interdiction of discussing anything except after having knowledge of it, and [also expressed is] a need to seek refuge in God from speech about anything except with knowledge. This is the truth that applies to everyone who is cognizant of God, and God the Exalted in this way commanded His prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as He said: ‘Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge’ [Q 17:36].<sup>18</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa,<sup>19</sup> may God be pleased with him, was asked about the source of [the doctrine of] deferment. He said: It is the act of the angels. When they were asked about a matter of which they did not know, they entrusted that matter to God the Exalted.<sup>20</sup>

Deferment is one of two types. One of them is praiseworthy, and it is deferment as regards [the fate of] the committers of major sins to the judgement of God the Exalted according to His will, so they are neither designated [as belonging] to hell nor paradise, as per the statement of the Exalted: ‘God does not forgive the association of partners to Him, and forgives whatever is devoid of this to whomever He wills’ [Q 4:48]. The blameworthy deferment is determinism. It is to defer [human] acts to God, without attributing any role to the servant; neither the performance nor the arrangement of the act.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The full verse reads: ‘Do not follow that which you have no knowledge of; the ears, the eyes and the heart – all of them will be asked about.’

<sup>19</sup> Eponymous founder of one the four main schools of Sunni law, early scholar of Islamic theology, and the main authority of whom al-Māturīdī considers himself a follower.

<sup>20</sup> Māturīdī scholar ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 539/1144?), author of the single known commentary on the *Ta’wīlāt*, explains that Abū Ḥanīfa conceived the fate of those who died with major sins within the context of deferment (*yarja’ amr al-ṣāhib al-kabā’ir*), understood as the suspension of judgment in expectation of God’s will (*mashī’at Allāh*). Abū Ḥanīfa is reported to have said that God can, if He wills, forgive major sinners and enter them into heaven without any punishment, or alternatively punish them to the amount of their sins (*‘adhdhabahum bi-qadri dhunūbihim*) prior to leading them to heaven. Al-Samarqandī then reports that Abū Ḥanīfa was asked about the origin of this idea and that he gave the above response (‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ Ta’wīlāt al-Māturīdī*, MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Hamidiye 176, fol. 21a [undated]).

<sup>21</sup> The term *tadbīr*, here translated as ‘arrangement’, has the meaning of pre-ordainment when used in reference to God, in the sense of realisation as part of the divine plan. It appears in the Qur’an in verb form four times (10:3; 10:31; 13:2; 32:5) with the same meaning. When used by al-Māturīdī in reference to humans, however, the term most likely denotes intention.



وعلى ذلك المرويّ حيث قال: "صنفان من أمتي لا ينالهم شفاعتي: القدرية والمرجئة".  
والقدريّة هي التي لم تر لله في فعل الخلق تدبيراً، ولا له عليه قدرة التقدير. والمرجئة هي  
التي لم تر للعبد فيما ينسب إليه من الطاعة والمعصية فعلاً البتّة، فأبطلت الشفاعة لهما  
وجعلتها للمذهب الأوسط بينهما، وهو الذي يحقّق للعبد فعلاً ولله تقديرًا، ومن العبد  
تحرّكاً بخير أو شرٍّ ومن الله خلقته، وذلك على المعقول ممّا عليه طريق العدل والحقّ، إنّه  
بين الإفراط والتقصير. وكذلك قال رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم: "خير الأمور أوساطها".  
وكذلك قال الله تعالى: ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا﴾<sup>22</sup>، الآية. ولا قوّة إلا بالله.

It is on this [matter] that the [prophetic] narration<sup>23</sup> states: ‘Two groups from my community will not be granted intercession: The Qadariyya and the Murji’a’.<sup>24</sup> The Qadariyya are those who regard God as neither arranging human acts nor exercising a power to realise them. The Murji’a are those who do not consider the servant as acting in whatever obedience or rebellion is ascribed to them. So the intercession was made invalid to both (groups) and permissible for the school positioned between them,<sup>25</sup> which recognises that the performance of the act belongs to the servant and the realisation of it belongs to God. From the servant comes the move to either (do) good or evil, and from God comes the creation [of the act].<sup>26</sup> This is what reason understands from the path of justice and fairness; it is between excessiveness and deficiency. In this sense, the Messenger of God, may God grant him blessings and peace, said: ‘The best of affairs is the moderate one’.<sup>27</sup> And in the same manner, God the Exalted, said: ‘We have made you a moderate nation’ [Q 2:143]. And there is no power except with God.

<sup>23</sup> The following hadith is narrated by Jūzaqānī from Anas ibn Mālik. It continues with an alternative description of the two groups to the one al-Māturīdī provides (below). Shawkānī deems the hadith to be *mawḍūʿ* (fabricated) (Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Shawkānī, *al-Fawāʿid al-majmūʿa fī l-aḥādīth al-mawḍūʿa*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yaḥyā al-Yamanī, Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1960, pp. 452–3). In al-Samarqandī’s *Sharḥ*, the second group is alternatively named the Jabriyya, that is, the determinists (see fn. 24).

<sup>24</sup> The Qadariyya arose approximately in the late seventh century as one of the first sects in Islam. They claimed that human actions originated from a free will belonging to the individual person and their name was often used pejoratively for the later Muʿtazila theological school which assumed their libertarian views. The Murji’a arose contemporarily with the Qadariyya. Their name, derived from *irjāʾ*, is a collective term that refers to the early Islamic groups who deferred judgment to God on the eschatological fate of major sinners and refrained from making declarations about their spiritual status. Here, however, al-Māturīdī is attributing to them the deferment of all acts to God, by which he means determinism (*al-jabr*). This is confirmed in al-Samarqandī’s *Sharḥ*, where ‘the innovating Murji’a’ (*al-murjiʿa al-mubtadiʿa*) are identified as determinists (*jabriyya*) (fol. 21a) for believing that God’s servants are merely ‘like the tree moving in the wind’ (*kamā l-shajara tatahararak bi-l-rīḥ*) (fol. 21b).

<sup>25</sup> Here, al-Māturīdī is referring to the Ahl al-Sunna as the middle school. See Topaloğlu, *Teʿvilātü’l-Kurʾân Tercümesi*, p. 112.

<sup>26</sup> These lines contain a group of metaphysical terms that have intricate differences in meaning. *Tadbīr* (see fn. 21), is contrasted in this passage with *taqdīr*, which is translated as ‘realise’, in the sense of to make real or concrete. *Taqdīr* is also often translated as ‘divine decree’, though that reading has not been preferred here. The term *fiʿl* (act) is related to *haraka* (movement), and as such it appears al-Māturīdī means action of the heart or, in other words, intention. Also in this passage, *taqdīr* is associated with *khalaqa* (create), and this association is one reason for the preferred translation of ‘realise’ for the former. Al-Samarqandī phrases the matter slightly differently from the *Taʿwīlāt*. He writes the correct school is the one which ‘recognises that performance of the acquired act (*fiʿl<sup>am</sup> kasb<sup>am</sup>*) belongs to the servant, and that the creation and decree (*khalq<sup>am</sup> wa taqdīr<sup>am</sup>*) belongs to God’ (*Sharḥ*, fol. 21b). The ‘acquirement’ mentioned might refer to either the act made real for the individual by God or the moral significance and responsibility attached to it.

<sup>27</sup> This hadith, as cited in Bayḥaqī’s *al-Sunnan al-kubrā*, “Kitāb ṣalāt al-khawf”, reads: An affair between two affairs, and the best of affairs is the moderate one (أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ وَخَيْرُ الْأُمُورِ) (أَوْسَطُهَا) (Abū Bakr al-Bayḥaqī, *al-Sunnan al-kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿĀṭa, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1424/2003, vol. 3, p. 387), and is classed *munqaṭʿi* (i. e. missing a single narrator in its chain of transmission). It also is included in Shawkānī’s collection of *mawḍūʿ* hadith (*al-Fawāʿid*, p. 251), as narrated by Bayḥaqī, and judged to be *muḍal* (i. e. missing one or two narrators). Al-Samarqandī too cites in further support the Qurʾānic verse, ‘And thus We made you a moderate nation’ (*ummat<sup>am</sup> wasaṭ<sup>am</sup>*) (Q 2:143).

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## The Intellect as Instrument of Knowledge

Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1100), *Uṣūl al-dīn*

DALE J. CORREA

Ṣadr al-Islām Abū l-Yusr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1100) – better known as al-Qāḍī Abū l-Yusr al-Pazdawī – is the brother of Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī, and hails from the village of Bazda (Pazdah) near Nasaf (Nakhshab). Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bazdawī was apparently so well known for his straightforward, clear writing that he was given the name Abū l-Yusr (literally, the Father of Ease), whereas his brother was known as the opposite: Abū l-‘Uṣr (the Father of Hardship). Abū l-Yusr was a teacher of law and Hadith in Bukhara, and eventually became the *qāḍī* of Samarqand.<sup>1</sup>

Abū l-Yusr’s *Uṣūl al-dīn* (‘Roots of Religion’), a theological treatise, is one of two known works attributed to the scholar. The other is *Ma’rifat al-ḥujaj al-shar’iyya*, a work of legal theory. Abū l-Yusr situates the *Uṣūl al-dīn* within the Ḥanafī theological lineage of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), although he notes that al-Māturīdī’s own works were quite difficult for him to understand and utilise. Abū l-Yusr’s theological contribution can be understood as a clearly-articulated explication of the Ḥanafī theological school in its post-formative period.<sup>2</sup>

In the selected excerpt,<sup>3</sup> Abū l-Yusr takes on the intellect (*al-‘aql*) in a theological context. In the first section, he deals with the intellect as a subtle, physical instrument (*āla*) for attaining knowledge of things. He compares it to the nose, eyes, ears, hand, and mouth as an instrument for acquiring knowledge. Abū l-Yusr describes how the brain is the ‘seat’ of the intellect, but its effect carries through to the heart. He goes so far as to cite a *qudsī* hadith in which

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Abd Allāh Kiyānī Farīd, “Bazdawī, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Abū l-Yusr”, *Dānish-nāma-yi Jihān-i Islām/Encyclopaedia Islamica*, Tehran: Bunyad-i Dayirah-yi al-Ma’āraf-i Islāmī, 1993, vol. 3, available at: <https://rch.ac.ir/article/Details/6657?بازدوی-محمد-بن-محمد-ابوالیسر> (accessed 11 October 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Muhammed Aruçi, “Pezdevi, Ebü'l-Yüsr”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007, vol. 34, pp. 266–7.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hans Peter Linss and Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li l-Turāth, 2003, pp. 212–7.

God declares that He will be worshipped, He will reward, and He will punish through the intellect. This section sets the intellect apart as a distinctive human anatomical and rational trait, created by God for the purpose of discernment of the necessity to worship Him and be thankful to Him. The second section on the necessity of the intellect goes into more detail as to whether or not God entails faith through the intellect. Abū l-Yusr makes a point of highlighting the varying scholarly opinions on this question within the Ḥanafī theological universe. After some creative argumentative gymnastics, Abū l-Yusr manages to recover Abū Ḥanīfa's (d. 150/767) opinion through Abū l-Ḥasan al-Karkhī (d. 340/951) to support the view he wishes to put forth: that humans are not required to have knowledge of God's existence before the coming of the Messengers, even with their great intellect.

[Selected text begins on the following page]

### مسألة {٧٤}: العقل آلة لمعرفة الأشياء.

أجمع أهل القبلة أنَّ العقل آلة وقوع العلم بالأشياء، كالعين آلة وقوع العلم بالمرئيات، والأذن آلة وقوع العلم بالمسموعات، والأنف آلة وقوع العلم بالمشمومات، والفم آلة وقوع العلم بالمذوقات واليد آلة وقوع العلم باللموسات، لأنَّ الله تعالى أجرى العادة أنَّ العبد إنَّما يصير فاعلاً بالآلات، وإن لم تكن الآلة شرط وجود الفعل، فإنَّ الله تعالى فاعل بلا آلة. والله تعالى خلق العقل وجعله آلة لمعرفة الأشياء في حقِّ العباد، وهو جسم لطيف مُضيء محلُّه الرأس عند عامَّة أهل السنَّة والجماعة. وأثره يقع على القلب فيصير القلب مُدركاً بنور العقل الأشياء كالعين تصير مُدركةً بنور الشمس وبنور السراج الأشياء. فإذا قلَّ النور أو ضعف، قلَّ الإدراك وضعف. وإذا انعدم النور، انعدم الإدراك. وعند بعض المعتزلة: العقل عرض. وعند بعض الأشعرية: العقل نوع علم.

وجه قول من يقول إنَّه نوع علم: أنَّ الله تعالى قال: ﴿لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئاً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ﴾<sup>4</sup>، أي لا يعلمون. وكذا الناس يقولون: فلان لا يعقل شيئاً.

وجه قول من يقول إنَّ العقل عرض: أنَّه يقال: فلان عاقل من العقل، كما يقال عالم من العلم وجالس من الجلوس، وهذا كلُّه عرض، كذا هذا. فعند هؤلاء العقل كالصفاء للعين في إدراك الأشياء، وهو صفاء القلب.

وجه قول عامَّة أهل السنَّة والجماعة: حديث سمعناه من أئمَّتنا بأسانيد متَّصلة أنَّ النبي صَلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم قال خيراً عن الله أنَّه قال: ”ما خلقتُ شيئاً أحسن من العقل، فقلتُ له: تقدِّم فتقدِّم، فقلتُ له: تأخَّر فتأخَّر، فقلتُ: بك أُعبدُ وبك أُثيب وبك أعاقب“، فدلَّنا هذا الحديث على أنَّه جسم لطيف نورانيُّ تدرك به الأشياء.

<sup>4</sup> سورة البقرة ١٧٠/٢.

**Issue [74]: The Intellect is an Instrument for Knowing Things.**

The people of the qibla have agreed that the intellect is an instrument for the occurrence of knowledge of things, just as the eye is an instrument for the occurrence of knowledge of the visible, the ear is an instrument for the occurrence of auditory knowledge, the nose is an instrument for the occurrence of olfactory knowledge, the mouth is the instrument for the occurrence of gustatory knowledge, and the hand is the instrument for the occurrence of tactile knowledge. For God the Exalted has made it the norm that the servant only becomes a doer through instruments, even if the instrument is not a condition for the existence of the action. God the Exalted is an actor without any instrument. God the Exalted created the intellect and made it an instrument for knowing things for the servants. It [i. e. the intellect] is a subtle and illuminating body, its seat is the head – in the opinion of the majority of *ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a*.<sup>5</sup> Its effect occurs on the heart, so the heart is able to perceive things through the light of the intellect, just as the eye is able to perceive things through the light of the sun and the light of the lamp. If the light lessens or is weak, so too does perception lessen and weaken. If the light disappears, so too does perception. In the opinion of some of the Mu'tazila, the intellect is an accident. In the opinion of some of the Ash'ariyya, the intellect is a type of knowledge.

The argument of those who say that [the intellect] is a type of knowledge: that God the Exalted said, 'they did not use their reason at all, nor were they guided' [Q 2:170]. That is: they did not know. Likewise, people say: so-and-so does not know (*ya'qil*) a thing.

The meaning of the statement of those who say that the intellect is an accident: that it is said, so-and-so is intelligent from the 'intellect', just as it is said [so-and-so] is knowledgeable [as derived lexicographically] from 'knowledge' and [so-and-so] is sitting [as derived lexicographically] from 'sitting'. All of that is an accident, and so likewise this. In the opinion of these [people], the intellect is like clarity for the eye in perceiving things, and it is the clarity of the heart.

The meaning of the statement of the totality of *ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a*: a hadith which we have heard from our imams through connected chains of transmission that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, gave a report from God that He said: 'I have not created anything better than the intellect. I told it to advance, it advanced. I told it to go back, it went back. So I told it, through you I will be worshipped; through you I will reward; and through you I will punish.'<sup>6</sup> We have evinced this hadith to [show] that [the intellect] is a subtle, illuminating body through which things are perceived.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Bazdawī intends by *ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a* his Sunnī, primarily (though not exclusively) Ḥanafī colleagues.

<sup>6</sup> For the hadith, see Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafā', 1983, vol. 1, pp. 96–7.



وقال أكثر العلماء: إنّ محلّه الدماغ وأثره في القلب، بنوره يُدرك القلبُ الأشياء، وإليه أشار أصحابنا فإنّهم قالوا: إذا ضرب إنسان رأسَ غيره زال عقله. فجعلوا العقل في الرأس. وبهذا الحديث يبطل ما قالوا، ولكن يقال عقل إذا علم كما يقال أبصر إذا علم لأنّ بالعقل يعلم، ويقال فلان عاقل أي عالم لأنّ العقل يُذكر ويراد به العلم، ويقال عاقل أي ذو عقل كما يقال تامر ولابن، أي ذو تمر وذو لبن.

### مسألة {٧٥}: هل العقل موجب؟ والقول في الإيمان بالله تعالى وبما يجب.

قال عامّة أهل السنّة والجماعة: لا يجب على العاقل أداء شيءٍ ما إلّا بالخطاب من الله تعالى على لسان واحد من عباده، وكذا لا يجب عليه الامتناع عن شيءٍ ما إلّا به. وبه قال الأشعري.

وعند المعتزلة: يجب الإيمان بالله تعالى والشكر له قبل بلوغ الخطاب. وهل يجب عندهم الإقرار بالرسول؟ عند بعضهم يجب الإقرار بجملّة الرسل لا بالأعيان، وعند بعضهم لا يجب.

وقال الشيخ أبو منصور الماتريدي بمثل ما قالت المعتزلة، وهو قول عامّة علماء سمرقند وبعض علمائنا من أهل العراق. وقد ذكر الكرخي في مختصره عن أبي حنيفة أنّه قال: لا عُذر لأحدٍ في معرفة الخالق لما يرى في العالم من آيات الحدوث، وأئمّة بخارى الذين شاهدناهم كانوا على القول الأوّل، والمسألة تُعرف بأنّ العقل هل هو مُوجب؟ عند الفريق الأوّل غير مُوجب. وعند الفريق الثاني مُوجب. وهذا مجاز من الكلام، فإنّ العقل لا يكون موجِباً.

فالله تعالى هو الموجب لكن بسبب العقل، فيكون العقل عندهم سبباً للوجوب. وفائدة الاختلاف: أنّ مَنْ لم تبلغه الدعوة من رسول ما ولا دعوة رسول من رسله ولم يؤمن، هل يخلّد في النار؟ [...] ]

Most of the scholars have said: [the intellect's] seat is the brain, and its effect is in the heart; through its light, the heart perceives things. Our colleagues have [also] pointed to this, for they have said: if a person hits the head of another, his intellect is erased. So they have set the intellect in the head. With this hadith, what they have said is invalidated. However, it is said that one reasons when one knows, just as it is said that one perceives when one knows; because one knows through the intellect. It is also said, so-and-so is an intelligent individual – that is, knowing, because the intellect is mentioned and what is meant by it is knowledge. [Additionally,] it is said [one is] an intelligent individual – that is, one has intelligence, just as it is said *tāmīr* and *lābīn* – that is, one who has dates, and one who has milk.

**Issue [75]: Is the Intellect Necessitating? And the Doctrine on Faith in God the Exalted and by What It Is Necessitated.**

The majority of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* have said: it is not necessary for the intelligent person to discharge any [duty] except by address from God the Exalted through the tongue of one of His servants. Likewise, it is not necessary for [the intelligent person] to refrain from performing [any acts] except by (His address). This is the opinion of al-Ash'arī.

In the opinion of the Mu'tazila, faith in God the Exalted is necessary, as well as gratitude to Him, before [God's] address has reached [a people]. Is it their opinion that stated belief in the Messengers is necessary? In the opinion of some of them, it is necessary to affirm the Messengers as a whole though not as individuals; while for some others of them [i. e. the Mu'tazila], it is not necessary.

Shaykh Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī said the same as the Mu'tazila said, and it is the opinion of the majority of the [Ḥanafī] scholars of Samarqand and some of our [Ḥanafī] scholars from Iraq. Al-Karkhī has mentioned in his abridgment of [a work by] Abū Ḥanīfa that [the latter] said: there is no excuse for anyone in knowing the Creator, based on what one sees in the world of signs of [the world's] creation. The imams of Bukhārā that we have met held the first opinion. The issue is known to be: [whether or not] the intellect can necessitate [belief in God]? The first group holds that [the intellect] cannot necessitate it. The second group holds that [the intellect] can necessitate it, and this is metaphorically expressed in speech; [in reality] the intellect does not necessitate [faith].

It is God the Exalted who makes it necessary, but through the cause of the intellect. Thus, the intellect, in their opinion, is a cause of necessitation. The result of this difference of opinion is [the question]: is the one to whom no Messenger's call to faith has arrived, nor the call to faith of any messenger [preaching on behalf of] the Messengers of God, and who does not believe, condemned to the Fire for eternity? [...]

فإن قالوا: يستحيل أن تكون معرفة الله تعالى غير واجباً عليه.

فنقول: لم يستحيل؟ ثم نقول: لا يستحيل، لأنّ وجوب شيء من الله تعالى هو أن يأمره الله تعالى بتحصيله، ولا يستحيل أن لا يأمر الله تعالى عباده بمعرفته، ولأنّ الواجب ما يُمدح على تحصيله ويُلام على تركه، ولا يستحيل أن لا يمدح الله تعالى إنساناً بمعرفته ولا يذمّ بترك معرفته.

فإن قالوا: الكفر مسخوط الله تعالى، فيجب تركه، وتركه لا يتحقق إلا بالإيمان.

فنقول: ما الذي أردتم بالمسخوط؟

فإن قالوا: نريد به: غير مرضي.

فنقول: إن كان غير مرضي لماذا يجب تركه؟ فإنّ الواجب ما يُمدح على تحصيله ويُلام على تركه ويعاقب، ولا يستحيل أن لا يعاقب الله إنساناً على الكفر، فإنّه لا يعاقب في الدنيا، وكذا لا يُليم عليه كما في الدنيا.

فإن قالوا: ما روى الكرخي عن أبي حنيفة يدلُّ على أنّ الإيمان واجب دون بعث الرسل، وهكذا روى الحاكم الجليل في المنتقى عن أبي حنيفة. وإذا كان المذهب عن أبي حنيفة هكذا، يجب التمسك به على من يعتقد مذهب أبي حنيفة.

فنقول: يحتمل أنّه أراد به بعد مجيء الرسل، على أنّ الصحيح أنّه أراد به هكذا، لأنّ الإنسان لا يقدر أن ينظر في الآيات لاشتغاله باللهو وبأعمال الدنيا إلا بعد داع يدعوّه إلى التأمل والنظر في الآيات، كما في جميع ما غاب عن الحواس؛ لا يقدر كلّ إنسان التأمل فيه إلا بعد داع يدعوّه إلى التأمل في الدلائل. فيكون المراد منه بعد بعث الرسل، لأنّه لا يقدر على التأمل قبل ذلك غالباً، وهكذا الجواب عن احتجاجهم بالنصوص.

If they say: It is impossible that knowledge of God the Exalted is not necessary for [a human being].

Then we say: Why is it impossible? We [follow this by] saying: It is not impossible because the necessitation of something from God the Exalted, is that God the Exalted commands its attainment. It is not impossible that God the Exalted did not command His servants to have knowledge of Him, because the 'necessary' is that which one is praised for attaining and reproached for abandoning. It is not impossible that God the Exalted would not honour a person for knowing Him and not criticise for abandoning knowledge of Him.

If they say: Disbelief is loathed by God the Exalted, so its abandonment is necessary, and its abandonment is not realised except through faith.

Then we say: What do you mean by 'loathed by'?

Then if they say: We mean by it, 'not pleasing to'.

Thus, we say: If He were not pleased with it, then why is its abandonment necessary? Surely what is required is what is praiseworthy in its attainment, and reproachful for its abandonment and punishable. It is not impossible that God not punish a person for disbelief. He does not punish in this world, and likewise He does not reproach like He would in this world.

If they say: What al-Karkhī related from Abū Ḥanīfa indicates that faith is necessary [even] without the sending of the Messengers. Al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl<sup>7</sup> related likewise from Abū Ḥanīfa in *al-Muntaqā*. If the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfa puts it this way, then one who professes adherence to the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfa must hold to that opinion.

We say: It is possible that he meant by this 'after the arrival of the Messengers'. The correct [interpretation] is that he meant something similar, because the human being is not capable of investigating the signs [of God] due to their preoccupation with trivial matters and the work of this world except after a caller [to faith] calls them to contemplate and investigate the signs [of God] – just as with all that is absent from the senses. No human being can contemplate this except after a caller [to faith] calls them to contemplation of the indicators. Thus, what is meant by this is after the sending of the Messengers, because one is generally incapable of contemplating before that, in most cases, and this is also the response to their argumentation based on scriptural texts.

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<sup>7</sup> Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Majīd ibn Ismā'īl ibn al-Ḥākim, known as al-Ḥākim al-Marwazī (d. 334/945).

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## The Nature of Faith

Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd ibn 'Umar al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390),  
*Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*

NAJAH NADI

The linguist-*cum*-theologian Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd ibn 'Umar al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390) is a prominent scholarly figure within the Māturīdī and Ash'arī theological traditions. Whether he himself maintained an affiliation with the Ash'arīs or Māturīdīs is a contested idea. It is perhaps the most famous controversy concerning al-Taftāzānī in historical and contemporary accounts on his life and scholarship. We lack any self-pronouncements from al-Taftāzānī's side concerning his legal or theological *madhhab*-affiliations, and his writings display clear advocacy of both Maturīdī and Ash'arī doctrines. Nonetheless, due to the widespread acclaim of his commentary on the famous Māturīdī theological manual, *al-'Aqā'id al-nasafiyya*, and his appointment as the grand judge (*qāḍī l-quḍāh*) at the Ḥanafī court in Sarakhs, al-Taftāzānī has been mostly associated with the Māturīdī tradition. The originality of al-Taftāzānī's thought, as I argued elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> is best seen in his concern with critical verification of knowledge (*taḥqīq*), spurning *madhhab*-affiliations.

The subjects of al-Taftāzānī's writings cover the breadth of religious and literary topics from theology, theoretical jurisprudence, practical jurisprudence, and Arabic logic to Hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, Arabic rhetoric, morphology, and Sufism. Al-Taftāzānī's works on theology, morphology, and rhetoric enjoyed an almost universal interest in the various pre-modern and modern Islamic centres of education – from Egypt's al-Azhar, the Ottoman courts, and Safavid madrasas to the madrasas in the Indian subcontinent. Yet, al-Taftāzānī's most original theological work, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, a commentary on his own *Maqāṣid al-ṭalībīn*, received little attention in pre-modern and modern studies. Authored in Samarqand in 784/1383, it was his last theological work. The passage presented in this contribution is from this *magnum opus* and is an example of al-Taftāzānī's method of *taḥqīq*.

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<sup>1</sup> Najah Nadi, *Theorising the Relationship between Kalām and Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, PhD Diss., Oxford University, 2018.

The passage is an excerpt from the sixth section (*maqṣid*) on matters known through revelation (*ṣam'īyyāt*), discussing the nature of *īmān* (commonly translated as faith or belief).<sup>2</sup> In the introduction to his book, al-Taftāzānī states that the epistemological, ontological, and metaphysical *maqṣids* or objectives of the book are geared toward serving the establishment of *al-ṣam'īyyāt*. This passage is a good example of how al-Taftāzānī actually uses his epistemology and ontology sections to support creedal matters. It also shows the interconnectivity between the three spheres in understanding the essential concept of *īmān*. Al-Taftāzānī argues that assent (*taṣḍīq*) in the normative definition of *īmān* as (the acceptance of the heart – *taṣḍīq al-qalb*) is identical to the logical conception of assent (*taṣḍīq*) as understood by Muslim logicians.<sup>3</sup> Further, al-Taftāzānī brings an ontological depth to his discussion by arguing that religious commands (*awāmir*) are not restricted, in their existence, to the category of action; they can also pertain to the category of quality.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the essence of *īmān*, as a religious command,

<sup>2</sup> Translating *īmān* in the Islamic context as faith or belief are both problematic. Faith, in the Christian sense, for example, is a non-evidentiary state of certitude; while in Islamic theology, *īmān* is a state of certitude and acceptance that is either based on knowledge of the proofs themselves or knowledge of a trusted person's knowledge of those proofs, namely, imitation. As for the term belief, it is better suited to the Arabic term *ītiqād*, which mostly refers to such acceptance with no regard to the existence or non-existence of proofs. I have thus chosen to keep the Arabic term, *īmān*, untranslated.

<sup>3</sup> In his seminal work, *Knowledge Triumphant*, Franz Rosenthal explains that although the equation of *īmān* and *taṣḍīq* came about around 800, it was the Ash'arīs who significantly injected this notion into their theological discussions. He adds that this practice might have been influenced by the newly introduced discussions on Greek philosophy. See Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant. The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, Leiden: Brill, 1970, pp. 100–2. Wilfred Smith has also used, among other texts, parts of al-Taftāzānī's statements used here to conclude that *taṣḍīq* indeed denotes an intellectual process. See Wilfred C. Smith "Faith as *Taṣḍīq*", *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge, Albany NY: SUNY Press, 1979, pp. 96–119. Also see Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology. A Semantic Analysis of Imān and Islām*, Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1965.

<sup>4</sup> The Aristotelian Categories is a system of classifying existing beings into ten categories, or high genii, (substance, quality, quantity, relatives, being in time, place, position, having, acting, and being acted upon). It is part of his *Organon* and it provides the framework for his philosophical thinking. This system has been adopted and appropriated by Muslim logicians in what is termed (*al-ma'qūlāt al-'ashr*), starting as a section in works of *kalām* and *falsafa* and slowly becoming an independent genre of writing in post-classical works. Most Muslim theologians only accept three or four out of the ten categories, including the category of quality as it partly provides the framework for their sections on epistemology. Al-Taftāzānī classifies the category of quality into four types: a) sensory qualities, the five senses, b) qualities inhering in the soul, such as all types of apprehension (*idrāk*), c) qualities specific to quantities, such as dimensional qualities, and d) potential qualities, such as the potentiality of being or not being sick, broken, etc. The category of action or acting (*an yaf'al*), however, is mainly concerned, al-Taftāzānī explains, with effecting the occurrence of something (*ta'thīr al-shay' fī ghayrihi*). The section on this category is usually combined with its sister category, being acted upon (*an yanfa'il*). Both are theorising the requirements for the occurrence of an action in the external world, and the effective relationship between this action, and the actor, in the state of acting, and the acted upon, in such a state. Al-Taftāzānī, citing al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), explains that there is one

he concludes, is the quality of the intellect rather than the actions of limbs, as argued by those who claim commands must be within the category of action to conclude that the essence of *īmān* is actions. The deficiency of their argument is extensively discussed in the sections following the section presented here.

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comprehensive example of these two categories, that is, the changing and moving in the case of *an yaf'al*, and being changed and moved, in the case of *an yanfa'il*. All forms of acting, such as building, making, burning, etc, fall under this example of changing and moving. Al-Taftāzānī, citing Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037), explains that after the occurrence of the action in the external world, it moves from the realm of these two categories to either the category of quantity or the category of quality, depending on the action. Hence, the name acting (*an yaf'al*) is preferred over the name action (*fi'l*). This is also why many theologians, such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), claim that these two categories are only mentally existent and should not be amongst the categories. Understanding the limitation of the category of acting and its non-subsisting nature, al-Taftāzānī builds his understanding of *īmān* as a subsisting quality rather than the state of 'acting' upon the command to believe. He is not denying that some commands, such as the command to pray, would validly be placed under the category of acting as the person praying is engaged in this 'acting' from the beginning to the end of the prayer. This is not the case of *īmān* which is understood as subsistent thing, as we will see in the section below. For the Aristotelian system of Categories, see Paul Studtmann, "Aristotle's Categories", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/aristotle-categories/> (accessed 16 June 2020). For al-Taftāzānī's discussion of these categories, see Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd ibn 'Umar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, Istanbul: Maṭba'at al-Ḥājj Muḥarrām al-Busnawī, 1305/1887, vol. 1, pp. 200, 222, 229, 254, 285–6.



قال: لنا مقامات، الأول: أنَّ الإيمان فعل القلب دون مجرد فعل اللسان، الثاني: أنَّ التصديق دون المعرفة والاعتقاد، والثالث: أنَّ الأعمال ليست داخلية فيه بحيث ينتفي هو بانتفاءها.<sup>5</sup> [...]

ونحن نقول: لا شك أنَّ التصديق المعتبر في الإيمان هو ما يعبر عنه في الفارسيّة بـ”كرويدن وباورکردن وراست كوى داشتن“ إذا أضيف إلى الحاكم، و”راست داشتن وحق داشتن“ إذا أضيف إلى الحكم. ولا يكفي مجرد العلم والمعرفة الخالي عن هذا المعنى. لكن ههنا مواضع نظر، ومطارح فكر لا بدّ من التنبيه عليها، ولا غنى من الإشارة إليها.

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<sup>5</sup> Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 2, p. 249.

He [Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī in his *Maqāṣid al-ṭālibīn* upon which this is commentary] said: We have (a few) assertions: Firstly, *īmān* is the action of the heart, not merely the action of the tongue. Secondly, it is assent (*taṣḍīq*), not merely knowledge (*ma'rifa*)<sup>6</sup> or belief (*i'tiqād*). Thirdly, actions are not intrinsic to it [i. e. *īmān*] such that, were they to be absent, it would not be negated. [...]

We say [concerning the second assertion]: there is no doubt that assent (*taṣḍīq*) considered as [part of the definition of] *īmān*<sup>7</sup> is that which is expressed in the Persian language by [the terms] 'to accept, to believe, and to hold something as truthful'<sup>8</sup> when connected to the one making a judgment, and 'to be true and right'<sup>9</sup> when connected to the judgment itself. Mere knowledge or cognisance which lacks this meaning does not suffice [as *īmān*].<sup>10</sup> Yet, there are, in this issue, areas of investigation and further thinking to which we must alert you, as there is no escaping their mention.

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the Arabic terms, *ilm* and *ma'rifa*, each have more than one sense. In one sense, they are synonyms. In another sense, they are defined in opposition to each other. In our author's usage, when he uses them together, he intends to bring out their opposition (e. g. the last paragraph of this text), but when he uses them separately (e. g. this passage), he merely intends the general meaning of 'knowledge', thus using them as synonyms. My translation follows this usage.

<sup>7</sup> That is the normative definition which states that *īmān* is the acceptance of the heart (*taṣḍīq al-qalb*). For the linguistic usage of *īmān* and *taṣḍīq* as synonyms, see Azharī (d. 369/980), *al-Tahdhīb*, "alif-mīm-nūn" and "ṣād-dāl-qāf"; Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004), *Maqāyīs*, "alif-mīm-nūn"; and Ibn Manẓūr (630–711/1233–ca.1312), *Lisān al-Arab*, "alif-mīm-nūn", which states: 'the people of knowledge, linguists and others, agree that *īmān* means *taṣḍīq*'.

<sup>8</sup> *Geravīdan va bāvar kardan va rast kavā dashtan*.

<sup>9</sup> *Rāst dāshtan va haqq dāshtan*.

<sup>10</sup> The original paragraph contains both Arabic and Persian and is somewhat obscure. However, the point being made here, though it is a semantic point, will be relevant to the arguments unfolding in the next passage.

الأول: أنه ليس معنى كون المأمور به مقدوراً واختيارياً أنه يلزم أن يكون البتة من مقولة الفعل التي ربما ينازع في كونها من الأعيان الخارجيّة، دون الاعتبارات العقلية، بل أن يصحّ تعلّق قدرته به، وحصوله بكسبه واختياره، سواء كان في نفسه من الأوضاع والهيئات، كالقيام والقعود، أو الكيفيات، كالعلم والنظر، ﴿فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ﴾<sup>11</sup>، ﴿قُلْ انْظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾<sup>12</sup>، أو الانفعالات، كالنسخ والتبديد، والحركات والسكنات، وغير ذلك، كالصلاة، أو التروك، كالصوم، إلى غير ذلك. ومع هذا فالواجب المقدور المثاب عليه بحكم الشرع يكون نفس تلك الأمور، لا مجرد إيقاعها؛ فكون الإيمان مأموراً به اختيارياً مقدوراً مثاباً عليه لا ينافي كونه كفيّة نفسانيّة يكتسبها المكلف بقدرته واختياره، بتوفيق الله تعالى وهدايته. على أنه لو لم يكن المأمور به هو الفعل بمعنى التأثير جاز أن يكون معنى الأمر بالإيمان الأمر بإيقاعه واكتسابه وتحصيله، كما في سائر الواجبات.

<sup>11</sup> سورة محمد ٤٧/١٩.

<sup>12</sup> سورة يونس ١٠/١٠١.

Firstly, it is not necessary for a command to be from the category of action in order that it be possible to fulfil it and for one to have choice [regarding fulfilling it] – in spite of the fact that one may argue that it is an external entity, not a [mere] rational consideration. Rather, it means that [the commanded thing] must be such that it is valid for the power, choice, and acquisition of [the one being commanded] to attach to it. This would equally include [A] that which, in and of itself, is a type of posture or position, such as standing and sitting; or [B] a quality,<sup>13</sup> such as knowledge and speculation, [just as referred to in the following verses:] ‘Know that there is no God but’ He [Q 47:19], ‘Say: Behold what is in the heavens and the earth’ [Q 10:101]; or [C] instances of being acted upon,<sup>14</sup> such as becoming hot or cold, movement and stillness; and [D] other than that, such as prayer [which is an action], or abstentions, such as fasting, and so on. In spite of this, obligatory matters that are both possible and rewardable due to a religious ruling are the [above mentioned] matters themselves, not merely their occurrence. Accordingly, *īmān* being commanded, possible, and subject to choice and reward, does not contradict its being a quality inhering in the soul that the responsible person acquires by means of their own power and choice, through the support and guidance of God the Exalted. Even were it necessary for a matter that is commanded to be an action, in the sense of bringing about an effect, it would be possible that the meaning of the command to have *īmān* is a command to bring it about, acquire it, or attain it, just as is the case regarding all other obligations.

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<sup>13</sup> That is the category of quality (*maqūlat al-kayf*).

<sup>14</sup> That is the category of being acted upon (*maqūlat al-infi‘āl*).

الثاني: أنّ ابن سينا وهو القدوة في فنّ المنطق، والثقة في تفسير ألفاظه، وشرح معانيه، صرّح بأنّ التصديق المنطقي الذي قسم العلم إليه وإلى تصوّر هو بعينه اللغوي المعبر عنه في الفارسيّة بـ "كرويدن" المقابل للتكذيب، قال في كتابه المسمّى بدانش نامه علائي: "دانش دوكونه است يكي درباften ودررسيدن وأنرا بتازى تصور خوانند ودوم كرويدن وأنرا بتازى تصديق خوانند". وهذا صريح بأنّ ثاني قسمي العلم هو المعنى الذي يوضع بإزائه لفظ التصديق في لغة العرب، و"كرويدن" في لغة الفرس، ونفيّ لما عسى يذهب إليه معاند من أنّ "كرويدن" في المنطق غيره في اللغة. وقال في الشفاء: "التصديق في قولك البياض عرض هو أن يحصل في الذهن نسبة صورة هذا التأليف إلى الأشياء أنفسها أنّها مطابقة لها، والتكذيب يخالف ذلك". فلم يجعل التصديق حصول النسبة التامة في الذهن علي ما يفهمه البعض، بل حصول أن ينسب الذهن الثبوت أو الانتفاء الذي بين طرفي المؤلّف إلى ما في نفس الأمر بالمطابقة، ومعناه نسبة الحكم إلى الصدق، أعني: "صادق داشتن وكرويدن". ويبيّنه بأنّه ضدّ التكذيب الذي معناه النسبة إلى الكذب، أعني: "كاذب داشتن".

Secondly, Ibn Sīnā – who is the model in the art of logic, the trustworthy one in interpreting its expressions and explaining its meanings – states that logical *taṣḍīq*, into which knowledge is divided alongside *taṣawwūr*, is exactly the linguistic meaning expressed in Persian as *geravīdan* and contrasted with denying (*takdhīb*), as he says in his book, *Dānish-nāmeḥ 'Alā'ī*.<sup>15</sup> 'Knowledge is two types: the first is simple apprehension and grasping, which is called *taṣawwūr* in Arabic. The second is *geravīdan*, which they call *taṣḍīq* in Arabic'. This is explicit that the second of the two sub-divisions of knowledge is the meaning to which the expression *taṣḍīq* is assigned in the language of Arabs, and *geravīdan* in the language of Persians. This also refutes what might be claimed by an intransigent person, that *geravīdan* in logic is different than it is in language. He [i. e. Ibn Sīnā] said in *al-Shifā'*: 'The assent [which occurs] in your statement, "Whiteness is an accident", is that there obtain in the mind the relation between the form of this [verbal] composition and the things themselves – that it is adequate to them – whereas denial is opposed to this'. Thus, he did not make assent the occurrence of the predication in the mind, as understood by some. Rather, [it is] the occurrence that the mind attributes the affirmation or negation that is between the two terms of the [verbal] composition<sup>16</sup> being adequate to things in themselves.<sup>17</sup> The meaning of the [latter understanding] is to relate the judgment to truthfulness, I mean holding it to be truthful or accepting it. He [i. e. Ibn Sīnā] has clarified [this meaning by stating that] its opposite is denial, which means judge something to be untruthful, by which I mean what is called [in Persian] 'to be false'.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Dānish-nāmeḥ 'Alā'ī* was partly translated from the original Persian to English by Farhang Zabeeh, see Farhang Zabeeh (ed. and trans.), *Avicenna's Treatise on Logic. Part one of Danesh-nama Alai, A Concise Philosophical Encyclopaedia and Autobiography*, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971. The book is used by al-Taftāzānī as an authority of what the logical terms *taṣawwūr* and *taṣḍīq* mean according to a logician. Ibn Sina classifies knowledge, in Persian, and uses their equivalent Arabic terms to show the similarity between Arabic and Persian terms in logic. The significance of the Persian terms is not as clear as al-Taftāzānī makes it seem. However, his argument that the use of *taṣḍīq* in logic and theology is the same stands clear.

<sup>16</sup> That is the subject and predicate of a proposition.

<sup>17</sup> The difference between the two understandings of *taṣḍīq* is that the first is concerned with the truthfulness of the proposition while the second is concerned with the role of the intellect in arriving at and accepting such a truthfulness. This second understanding allows for *taṣḍīq* being within religious commands and under the category of quality while the first restricts it to the realm of 'actions.'

<sup>18</sup> *kādhīb dashtan*.

وبهذا يندفع ما يقال إن الحكم فعل اختياريّ هو الإيقاع أو الانتزاع، فكيف يكون نفس التصديق أو جزؤه والتصديق قسم من العلم الذي هو من مقولة الكيف أو الانفعال؟ ونعم ما قال مَنْ قال: الإسناد والإيقاع ونحو ذلك ألفاظ وعبارات. والتحقيق أنه ليس للنفس ههنا تأثير وفعل، بل إذعان وقبول، وإدراك أن النسبة واقعة أو ليست بواقعة. نعم، حصول هذا التصديق قد يكون بالكسب، أي: مباشرة الأسباب بالاختيار، كإلقاء الذهن، وصرف النظر، وتوجيه الحواس، وما أشبه ذلك، وقد يكون بدونه، كمن وقع عليه الضوء فعلم أن الشمس طالعة. والمأمور به يجب أن يكون من الأوّل.

فإن قيل: فاليقين الحاصل بدون الإذعان والقبول بل مع الجحود والاستكبار، كما للسوفسطائي ولبعض الكفّار، يكون من قبيل التصوّر دون التصديق، وهو ظاهر البطلان. قلنا: نحن لا ندّعي إلا كون التصديق المنطقي - على ما يفسّره رئيسهم لا على ما يفهمه كلّ نسّاج وحلّاج - هو التصديق اللغوي المقابل للتكذيب، المعبر عنه بـ"كرويدن"، وأنّه لا يصحّ حينئذٍ بتّ القول وإطباق القوم على أنّ المعتبر في الإيمان هو اللغوي دون المنطقي، بل غايته أنّه يجب اشتراط أمور، كالاختيار وترك الجحود والاستكبار. وأمّا أنّه يلزم على قصد تقسيمه وتفسيره كون اليقين الخالي عن الإذعان والقبول تصوّراً أو خارجاً عن التصوّر والتصديق، فذلك بحث آخر، لكن الكلام في إمكان الإيقان بدون الإذعان. [...]

Through the above, [we] refute what has been claimed that [since] a judgment is an act of choice which is the performance or abstaining from performance [of an action], how could it be identical to an assent or a part of an assent, while an assent is a type of knowledge that falls under the category of quality or being acted upon? How truly the one spoke who said: ‘predication and occurrence are [mere] expressions and phrases’. The verified opinion is that the soul has no action and causal efficacy in this matter [i. e. *īmān*,] but only to submit<sup>19</sup>, accept, and apprehend, that a propositional relation has or has not occurred. Indeed, this assent could be achieved through acquisition – i. e. taking the means by choice, such as releasing the intellect, leading the investigation, and directing the senses [to the evidences], and the like – and it could also happen without any of these, such as a person upon whom rays of light have fallen, so they know that the sun has risen. The commands must be from the first type.

If it is argued that were certitude to exist separate from submission and acceptance – but rather with denial and arrogance, such as occurs with sophists and some unbelievers – it would be a type of conception, rather than an assent; which is clearly invalid. We respond: we are claiming nothing except that the logical *taṣḍīq*, as interpreted by their master [i. e. the logicians], not as understood by any weaver or wool-carder, is the linguistic *taṣḍīq* that contrasts denying (*takdhīb*), which is expressed [in Persian] as *geravīdan*. It is not then valid for people to fixate on, nor agree on, the claim that what is considered sufficient regarding *īmān* is the linguistic [meaning], not the logical. Indeed, the most that can be argued is that there must be conditions of matters like choice, absence of denial and arrogance [for *īmān* to be valid]. As for the issue that this categorisation and interpretation (of *taṣḍīq*) entails that certitude lacking submission and acceptance is a conception, or neither a conception nor an assent, is a different point of research. The present debate regards the possibility of the existence of certitude without submission.<sup>20</sup> [...]

<sup>19</sup> The term *idhān* used here to explain *taṣḍīq* is difficult to translate. Its lexical root, *dh-‘-n* denotes meanings of following, acceptance, and as such it is very similar to the term *qubūl* (acceptance) conjoined with *idhān* here. See Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004), *Maqāyīs*, “*dhāl-‘ayn-nūn*”.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Taftāzānī is arguing you cannot have a valid certitude without submission, but if it does exist, there is a debate on whether such a state is considered a conception or an assent. Some later logicians, such as Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī (d. 1101/1689–90), have discussed this debate and concluded that such a state would be considered a conception not an assent.



الثالث: أنّ لا نفهم من نسبة التصديق إلى المتكلّم بالقلب سوى إذعانه وقبوله وإدراكه لهذا المعنى، أعني: كون المتكلّم صادقاً من غير أن يتصوّر هناك فعل وتأثير من القلب، ونقطع بأنّ هذا كَيْفِيَّةٌ للنفس قد تحصل بالكسب والاختيار ومباشرة الأسباب، وقد تحصل بدونها. فغاية الأمر أن يشترط فيما اعتبر في الإيمان أن يكون تحصيله بالاختيار، على ما هو قاعدة المأمور به. وأمّا أنّ هذا فعل وتأثير من النفس لا كَيْفِيَّةٌ لها، وأنّ الاختيار معتبر في مفهوم التصديق اللغوي فممنوع، بل معلوم الانتفاء قطعاً، ولو كان الإيمان والتصديق من مقولة الفعل دون الكيف لَمَّا صحّ الاتّصاف به حقيقةً إلّا حال المباشرة والتحصيل، كما لا يخفى على من يعرف معنى هذه المقولة.

الرابع: أنّه وقع في كلام كثير من عظماء الملة وعلماء الأئمة مكان لفظ "التصديق" لفظ "المعرفة" و"العلم" و"الاعتقاد"، فينبغي أن يُحمل على العلم التصديقي المعبر عنه بـ"كرويدن"، ويقطع بأنّ التصديق من جنس العلوم والاعتقادات، لكنّه في الإيمان مشروط بقيود وخصوصيات، كالتحصيل والاختيار وترك الجحود والاستكبار. ويدلّ على ذلك ما ذكره أمير المؤمنين عليّ كرم الله وجهه أنّ الإيمان معرفة، والمعرفة تسليم، والتسليم تصديق.

Thirdly, attributing *taṣdīq* of the heart to a speaker leads us to understand nothing but their submission, acceptance, and his/her apprehension of such a meaning – I mean, the speaker's affirmation – without any conception of the heart (making an) action or (having a) causal efficacy [in the external world]. We are also certain that this is a psychological quality which may occur by means of acquisition, choice, and following the causes [of its achievement], and it may also occur without [these matters]. The upshot of the matter here is that we make a condition in what is considered *īmān* that it is acquired by means of choice, in accordance with the rule concerning [religious] commands [i. e. they must be performed with choice, not coercion]. [However, the claim] that this [*taṣdīq*] must be an action and an effect caused by the soul, not a quality of it, and that choice must be considered part of the linguistic conception of belief is an invalid [claim]. In fact, its invalidity is conclusively known. Further, if *īmān* and assent are of the category of action, not quality, it would have not been valid for anything to be characterised by it except in the instant that one is engaged in it and the moment of its occurrence.<sup>21</sup>

Fourthly, the use of the expressions 'cognisance', 'knowledge', and 'belief', has occurred in the speech of many luminaries of the religion [of Islam] and scholars of the Umma in place of *taṣdīq* [in their definition of *īmān*]. This must be interpreted as referring to knowledge characterised by assent which is expressed [in Persian] as *geravīdan*. It must also be emphasised that although *taṣdīq* falls under the genus of knowledge and belief, it is conditioned, in *īmān*, upon qualifications and special qualities, such as [the believer] bringing it about, [having] choice, and abstaining from denial and arrogance. This is indicated by what was mentioned by the Commander of the Believers, Imām 'Alī, may God ennoble his face, that *īmān* is knowledge; knowledge is submission; submission is assent.

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<sup>21</sup> Review fn. 4 in the introduction, explaining this point from al-Taftāzānī's section on categories.

فإن قيل: قد ذكر إمام الحرمين والإمام الرازي وغيرهما أنَّ التصديق من جنس كلام النفس، وكلام النفس غير العلم والإرادة. قلنا: معناه أنَّه ليس بمتعين أن يكون علماً أو إرادةً، بل كل ما يحصل في النفس من حيث يدل عليه بعبارة أو كتابة أو إشارة فهو كلام النفس، سواء كان علماً أو إرادةً أو طلباً أو إخباراً أو استخباراً، أو غير ذلك، وليس كلام النفس نوعاً من المعاني مغايراً لما هو حاصل في النفس باتفاق الفرق، وإلا لكان إنكاره إنكاراً للتصديق والطلب والإخبار والاستخبار، وسائر ما يحصل في القلب، وليس كذلك، بل إنكاره عائد إلى أنَّ الكلام هو المسموع فقط دون هذه المعاني. فالقول بأنَّ الإيمان كلام النفس لا يكفي في التقصي عن مطالبته أنَّه من أي نوع من أنواع الأعراض، وأية مقولة من المقولات. ولا محيص سوى تسليم أنَّه من الكيفيات النفسية الحاصلة بالاختيار الخالية عن الجحود والاستكبار. وليت شعري أنَّه إذا لم يكن [الإيمان] من جنس العلوم والاعتقادات فما معنى تحصيله بالدليل أو التقليد؟ وهل يُعقل أن يكون ثمرة النظر والاستدلال غير العلم والاعتقاد؟<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 2, pp. 251–3.

If it is argued that Imām al-Ḥaramayn [al-Juwaynī, d. 478/1085] and al-Imām al-Rāzī [Fakhr al-Dīn, d. 606/1209] as well as others stated that an assent falls under the genus of speech inside the soul (*kalām al-naḥs*), and speech inside the soul is different from knowledge and will. We respond: what this means is that [speech] does not have to be knowledge or will; rather, everything that occurs in the soul in so far as it can be indicated by [external] speech, writing, or signifying is considered speech inside the soul. This can equally be knowledge, will, request, predication, or questioning, and so forth. Further, speech in the soul is not a different type of meaning than [other] matters which occur in the soul, by agreement of the theological schools. Otherwise, rejecting it [i. e. speech of the soul] would entail rejecting *taṣḍīq*, requests, predications, and questioning, as well as everything that occurs in the heart, none of which is true. Rejecting it then [i. e. speech of the soul], goes back to the idea that speech is only that which is heard, not these [above] meanings. The view which argues that *īmān* is speech of the soul does not suffice as a thorough investigation regarding which type of accident it is and to which of the categories it belongs. There is no escape from accepting that (*īmān*) is one of the qualities of the soul, occurring by means of choice, and lacking denial and arrogance. I wish I knew, if (*īmān*) does not share in being of the [same] type [of thing] as knowledge and beliefs, then what is the meaning of acquiring it through [rational] proofs or conformed following? Is it even rationally possible that the outcome of scholarly investigation and referential reasoning be anything other than knowledge or belief?

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## Part IV: Free Will, Predestination and the Problem of Evil



## Divine Justice

Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī/al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931),  
*Uyūn al-masā'il wa-l-jawābāt*

RACHA EL OMARI

Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī/al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931)<sup>1</sup> was a leading Mu'tazilī theologian and contemporary of Abū Maṣ'ūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944). Al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*<sup>2</sup> documents his debates with al-Ka'bī, debates which, in turn, informed al-Māturīdī's innovative theological choices, including his conception of divine justice.<sup>3</sup> Like the Sunnī theologian Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935–6), al-Māturīdī postulated God as a free omnipotent agent, but unlike al-Ash'arī, al-Māturīdī understood that God chooses to make the quality of His acts intelligible to human reason separately from revelation. Thus, al-Māturīdī was opposed to the Mu'tazilī axiom that God *must* do what is just for His servants, and to al-Ka'bī's notion that God must do the absolute best (*aṣḥaḥ*) for His servants when He creates them.

Although al-Ka'bī's 'doctrine of the optimum' is extensively noted in the works of his opponents, its original full content has long remained unknown, as none of his theological works survive. This has changed with a recent publication of al-Ka'bī's *Uyūn al-masā'il wa-l-jawābāt*, a work in which he tackles a variety of theological topics. The following translated passages are selected from a chapter titled *al-Ta'dīl wa-l-tajwīr* ('On establishing [God's] justice and refuting [claims of His] injustice'),<sup>4</sup> in which al-Ka'bī responds to the challenge of opponents he labels 'godless' (*mulḥidūn*)<sup>5</sup> by marshalling various arguments for his doctrine

<sup>1</sup> For a study of al-Balkhī/al-Ka'bī's theology on the basis of a critical account of his doctrines as extant in the testimonies of his opponents, see Racha el Omari, *The Theology of Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī/al-Ka'bī* (d. 319/931), Leiden: Brill, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand*, trans. Rodrigo Adem, Leiden: Brill, 2015, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 297–300.

<sup>4</sup> Ḥusayn Khanṣū, Rājiḥ Kurdī, and 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Kurdī (eds.), *Kitāb al-Maḳālāt wa-ma'āhu 'uyūn al-masā'il wa-l-jawābāt li Abī l-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Balkhī*, Amman: Dār al-Fatḥ, 2018, pp. 646–7; 651–2.

<sup>5</sup> On the identities and late antique backgrounds of these opponents, see Patricia Crone, "Excursus II. Ungodly Cosmologies", *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 103–29.



of the optimum. These opponents claim that there is an inherent contradiction in the monotheists' belief in a wise and just God who creates beings with the burden of moral responsibility when He knows that they will be unbelievers. Al-Ka'bi's response involves a central argument: just as reason is best for humankind, though in some cases it can lead to suffering and misfortune, so God's creation of humankind as morally responsible beings is also best for them, though He knows that some of them will be unbelievers.

[Selected text begins on the following page]

### في التعديل والتجوير

مسألة: قال المَلْحَدون كيف يجوز أن يكون الصانع تثبتونه حكيماً رحيماً جواداً وقد خلق خلقاً وهو يعلم أنهم يعصون فيصيرون إلى النار ويبقون فيها أبداً لا يخفّف<sup>6</sup> عنهم وهو لو لم يخلقهم أو إنّه حين خلقهم لم يكلفهم ما كفروا ولا استحقّوا به النار؟

الجواب: [قال]<sup>7</sup> الموحّدون أوجب [المَلْحَدون] أن يكون الخلق والتبليغ والتكليف قبيحاً ولا يكون حكمة، لأنّ ذلك لو لم يكن ما استحقّ أحد العقاب والخلود في النار. ولو [وجب] تسليم الجميع من العقاب واللوم لكان لا شيء أوضع وأخسّ ولا أضرّ من العقل، لأنّ الإنسان ممّا لم يكن عاقلاً لم يلحقه لوم في شيء ممّا يكون منه ولم يلزمه عتاب ولا أدب. ومن كان عاقلاً لحقه ذلك أجمع واستحقّه. والأئمّه موحّدوها وملحدوها [مجمعون] على شرف منزلة العقل وفضله وسقوط ضده.

فإن قالوا: إنّ العقل ليس يدعو إلى شيء من ذلك ممّا يوجب اللوم ولا يحمل عليه ولا يدخل فيه، بل هو ناهٍ ذلك زاجر عنه. ولو شاء العاقل لم يرتكب شيئاً من الموهوم القبيح. وبعد فإنّ في العقل منافع وهو عزّ العلم وشرف المعرفة و[أ]عظم موقع اللذة. قيل لهم: [...] <sup>8</sup>فإنّه لو زال لم يلحق اللوم العذاب ولم يهتد<sup>9</sup> الإنسان لكثير من الشرّ.

<sup>6</sup> The phrase لا يخفّف عنهم is referencing the Q 2:86, 2:162, 3:88, 16:85 and 35:36.

<sup>7</sup> All additions to the edited text or emendations of it are marked between square brackets.

<sup>8</sup> The Arabic text here is corrupt.

<sup>9</sup> This usage of the verb يهتدي is anomalous and departs from Qur'anic usage (for example, Q 2:53).

### On establishing (God's) justice and refuting (claims of His) injustice

A Question:<sup>10</sup> The godless opponents said: How is it possible that you maintain that the Maker is wise, compassionate and generous, when He created humankind knowing that they will disobey and end up in hellfire and remain in it for eternity, without alleviation for their suffering. [How do you maintain this belief about the Maker] when, if He had not created them, or if He had not made them morally responsible when He created them, then they would not have disbelieved and would not have deserved hellfire because of it [i. e. their disbelief]?

The Answer: The monotheists said: [The opponents] postulated that creation, sending revelation through a messenger, and the imposition of moral obligation are evil and not acts of wisdom because if these acts had not been [created], no one would have deserved punishment and eternity in hellfire. [Indeed if it were obligatory] that all human beings be spared from punishment and blame, then nothing would have been more inferior, base, or harmful than reason. For if a human being among us were not rational, he would not be afflicted by the blame caused by something that he did and neither rebuke nor discipline would have been his [end]. Whoever is endowed with reason would be afflicted with that, all of it, and would deserve it. However, [the monotheists added], humankind – monotheists and godless alike – are in agreement about the nobility of the rank of reason, the merit of reason, and the ignobility of its contrary.

If [the opponents] say that reason does not call for anything that necessitates blame, nor does it incite it, nor is it comprised of it; rather [they say], reason forbids these acts and prohibits them; [and] that should the rational person wish it, he would not commit anything erroneous that is evil, and there are benefits to reason, and it is the glory of science, the elevation of knowledge, and the greatest occasion for delight, then they are told: [But] if reason were removed, then suffering would not follow blame, and a human being would not be led to many [acts of] wrongdoing?

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<sup>10</sup> Khanṣū, Kurdī and Kurdī (eds.), *Kitāb al-Maqālāt*, pp. 646–7.

فإذا قالو: بلى ولا بدّ من ذلك. قيل لهم: فإذا كان العقل شريفاً فاضلاً لا عيب فيه للعلّة التي ذكرتم فكذلك التبليغ والتكليف، لأنّه وإن كان الإنسان لا يكفر ولا يستحقّ النار إلاّ مع وجودهما فإنّهما لم يدخلوا في الكفر والمعصية ولم يحملوا عليهما بل فيهما أشدّ الزجر والنهي عن ذلك. ولو شاء المكلف لأطاع واستحقّ الخلود في النعيم كما استحقّه غيره ممّن هو في مثل حاله، لا فرق بينه وبينه في القدرة والتمكين، وفيهما مع ذلك الوصول إلى المعرفة والعقل لأنّهما لا يكونان إلاّ مع التبليغ وفي تكليف الرئاسة في الدنيا والوصول إلى النعيم في الآخرة.

مسألة: فإن قالوا فهلاً خلق الله هؤلاء الذين علم أنّهم يطيعون ويؤمنون ولم يخلق أولئك الذين علم أنّهم يعصون ويكفرون. وكيف جاز أن يخلقهم وقد علم ذلك منهم؟

الجواب: قلنا لأمر. أحدها أنّ خلقه إيّاهم ثمّ تبليغه لهم وإن كان يعلم أنّهم يكفرون بجنايتهم على أنفسهم وسوء اختيارهم لها ليس بإساءة إليهم ولا ضرر عليهم بوجه من الوجوه بل هو إحسان وتفضّل وحسن نظر وتعريض للخير والنعيم المقيم والشواب الذي لا شيء أعلى وأفضل منه. وليس على من أحسن من سبيل ولا [...] <sup>11</sup> بل الذي يجب له الشكر والخنوع بالطاعة [...] <sup>12</sup>

فإن قالوا: فإنّ الله لم يكن يريد هذا الإحسان الذي أعقبه المكروه وأدّاه إلى الغفلة، ولو خيّر لم يختار ذلك لنفسه.

<sup>11</sup> There is a break in the edited text (ibid., p. 652).

<sup>12</sup> In many cases, such as this, the text is impossible to reconstruct (ibid., p. 34).

If they say: Surely what we stated must be true, then they are told: But if reason is noble, excellent, [and] without any defect, according to the explanation you mentioned, then the revelation of God's message and the imposition of moral obligation are also [noble, excellent, and without any defect]. For although a human being does not profess unbelief and deserve hellfire except with their [i. e. the revelation of God's message and the imposition of moral obligation] existence, they do not cause unbelief, disobedience, and incite [someone to commit these acts]. Rather, both of them [i. e. the revelation of God's message and the imposition of moral obligation] strictly prohibit and forbid unbelief. If a morally obligated person wished it, he could obey and deserve eternal life in bliss, just as anyone [else] in a state similar to his would deserve it. There is no difference between the two in their capacity for action and power. It is through revelation and moral obligation that knowledge and reason are attained. For knowledge and reason exist only with revelation and with the imposition of leadership in this world and the attainment of bliss in the hereafter.

A Question:<sup>13</sup> If they say: Why did not God create only those whom He knows will obey and believe in Him, and not create those whom He knows will disobey [Him] and not believe? How is it right for Him to create them when He already knows this about them?

The Answer: We say that this is the case for many reasons. One is that God's creation of them and His sending a revelation through a messenger – though He knows that they will not believe because of the wrongs they perpetuated against themselves and the bad choices [they made] for themselves – is not harm He inflicted upon them, nor is it detrimental to them in any possible way. Rather, they [i. e. His creation of them and His sending a revelation through a prophet] are grants of beneficence, favour, good discernment, and exposure [to the possibility of attaining] good and lasting felicity and reward that is superior and the best of all. Moreover, there is no constraint on whoever grants beneficence [...],<sup>14</sup> rather gratitude and submission are due to Him through obedience [...]<sup>15</sup>

If they say: God did not will this beneficence which occasioned, as its consequence, what is reprehensible to [a human being] and what led him to heedlessness, and [if they say]; indeed, if [a human being] were to choose, he would have not chosen that beneficence for himself.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 651–2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 652. There is a break in the edited text.

<sup>15</sup> In many cases, such as this, the text is impossible to reconstruct.

قلنا: لو كان هذا الإحسان أعقبه المكروه وأوقعه فيه أو أذاه إليه لكان لعمري يجب أن لا [يؤديه]<sup>16</sup>، بل الواجب أن لا يكون إحساناً في الحقيقة. فأمّا إذا لم يكن كذلك فليس تصير فيه إرادته ولا كراهيته، لأنّ المريض قد يكره الدواء وهو خير له، والمذنب لو خيّر أيضاً لم يختار العقاب على ذنبه بقدر استحقاقه وقد يكون مع ذلك أصلح له في عاجله وآجله، الصواب الذي لا يجوز غيره.

والوجه الثاني أنّه قد يجوز أنّ الله يعلم أنّه يخرج من صلب كلّ كافر ألف مؤمن ومائة تقيّ وإمام وقائد إلى الخير وداع إلى هدى وسائس للعباد وحافظ للبلاد. ولو أنّه ابتداء خلقهم ولم يخرجهم من أصلاب آباء وبطون أمّهات لم يصيروا إلى ذلك.

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<sup>16</sup> The edited text reads برّده.

Then we reply: If this beneficence were to cause [a human being] to commit a reprehensible act, or were to plunge him into it, or lead him to it, then, by my life, God must not have caused it. Rather, it cannot, truly, be beneficence. But if that is not the case [i. e. if it is indeed beneficence], then [a human being's] volition or aversion has no role in its occurrence. For a sick person may hate medicine when it is good for him. Equally, if a disobedient person were given a choice, he would not choose to be punished for his sin, as he deserves it, even though this punishment may be more beneficial for him in the short and long term, [even though] it is the right thing, and nothing other than it is permissible.

A second manner of responding to the question is to state that it is possible that God knows that from the loin of every unbeliever there will originate a thousand believers, a hundred devout people, guides, leaders to good, callers to guidance, rulers of subjects, and guardians of communities. Had He started their creation without having them originate from the loins of fathers and bellies of mothers, they would not have ended up as they did.



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## Knowledge and Free Will

Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*

PHILIP DORROLL

Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) was the founder of one of the greatest traditions of Sunni dogmatic theology and is considered to be one of the most widely influential thinkers in the history of Sunni Islam. He was born in Māturīd, in or near the cosmopolitan urban center of Samarqand, the city where he spent his life. His was a disciple of Abū Naṣr al-ʿIyāḍī (d. ca. 275/888), placing him in a long institutional tradition of Ḥanafī learning founded in that region by Abū Sulaymān al-Juzjānī (d. 200/816), himself a student of Abū Ḥanīfa's famous disciple Abū Yūsuf.

Māturīdī became a prominent member of the learned elite in Samarqand in his own right. Well-known for his defence of rational investigation in theology and his strong critique of blind traditionalism, he argued in defence of human free will and the ability of the human intellect to rationally analyse and prove the doctrines of religion. At the same time, he critiqued the rationalism of the Mu'tazila on the grounds that it compromised God's omnipotence and unknowable wisdom. Māturīdī held it necessary to affirm at one and the same time the efficacy of human freedom and the ultimate reality of divine omnipotence, as well as the efficacy of human reason and the ultimate reality of divine wisdom. His work can be seen as a systematic investigation of the logical relationship between these theological affirmations.

Māturīdī's extant writings include his extensive theological treatise *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* and his voluminous Qur'anic commentary, *Tā'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*.<sup>1</sup> This enormous work is notable for its extraordinary nuance and range of conceptual commentary, including extended theological arguments that deepen or clarify questions also discussed in *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. A number of other works that have been reliably attributed to him are not extant. These include a comparative work on differing Muslim theological schools, numerous theological refutations

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<sup>1</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Tā'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu et al., Istanbul: Mizan Yayınevi, 2005–11, 17 vols.

(most of which are aimed at the Mu'tazila and the Mu'tazilī theologian al-Ka'bī, d. 319/931), and several works on *uṣūl al-fiqh*.<sup>2</sup>

This selection provides an overview of Māturīdī's entire theological vision, including his metaphysics, theological anthropology, and epistemology.<sup>3</sup> The truth of things is rooted in the contrast between the nature of God and the nature of creation. God is single and unchanging, but creation is manifold and subject to constant change under the direction of God's wisdom. God has endowed human beings with the capacity for knowledge, the basis of which is direct sensory perception (*'iyān*) and the use of the intellect or reason (*'aql*), so that they can ascertain and choose good over evil. Humans err in their interpretation of the world and of God's revelation when they confuse the whims of their created natures with the clear perception of the truth provided by the intellect when it reflects on God's wise ordering of the universe.

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<sup>2</sup> For thorough overviews of his life and work, see Ahmet Ak, *Büyük Türk Alimi Maturidi ve Maturidilik*, İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2017; and Ulrich Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunni Theology in Samarqand*, trans. Rodrigo Adem, Leiden: Brill, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> From Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi, Ankara: İSAM, 2003, pp. 351–6.

[Selected text begins on the following page]

### مسألة في أفعال الخلق وإثباتها

الحمد لله المتوحد بالقدم والإلهية، المتفرد بالدوام والربوبية، ذي البرهان المنير والمُلك الكبير؛ الذي فطر الخلق بقدرته، وصرّفهم بحكمته على سابق علمه ومشيتته، وتقلب كلُّ برّيته في مواهبه وإحسانه. أنشأ الأشياء كيف شاء، ﴿لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ﴾<sup>4</sup>، لما يتمكن منهم السفه والحكمة، ليزجروا بالسؤال ثمّ بالجزاء عن السفه، ويرغبوا في الحكمة. ونسأله أن يكرمنا بالتوفيق، ويجدّر عزّمنّا التسديد، و ينور قلوبنا بالتوحيد، فإنّه حميد مجيد.

أمّا بعد، فإنّ الله تعالى لما خلق البشر للمحنة بما جعلهم أهل تمييز وعلم بالمحمود من الأمور والمذموم، وجعل ما يذمّ منها قبيحاً في عقولهم، وما يُحمد حسناً، وعظّم في أذهانهم إثارة القبيح على الحسن والرغبة فيما يذمّ على ما يُحمد، دعاهم - على ما عليه رُكبوا وما به أُكُرموا - إلى إثارة أمر على أمر، وقبح في عقولهم احتمال أمثالهم [غيره].

جعل الله جميع ما لهم فيه متقلب بين ضررٍ يتقى ونفعٍ يُرغب فيه، ليكون ذلك لهم علماً للموعود ممّا به الترغيب والترهيب. وأنشأهم على طبائع تنفر عن أشياء وتميل إلى أشياء، وأراهم في عقولهم حُسْنَ بعض ما تنفر عنه الطباع بحمد العواقب، وقُبْح بعض ما تميل إليه بدمّ العواقب. فصيرهم بحيث يحتملون المكروه على الطباع بلذذ العاقبة، ويقهرونه عمّا يدعوهم إليه بشهيّة النهاية.

<sup>4</sup> سورة الأنبياء ٢١/٢٣.

### A Question Regarding Human Acts and their Demonstration

Praise be to God, the only one distinguished by pre-eternity and divinity, unique in continuity and lordship, possessor of radiant proof and great dominion; He who brought forth creation through His omnipotence and continually alters their affairs through His wisdom, in accordance with His pre-existent knowledge and will. The entirety of His creation fluctuates within His gifts and His goodness. He establishes things as He wills: 'He shall not be questioned about what He does; but they shall be questioned' [Q 21:23].<sup>1</sup> Wherefore human beings may act according to either foolishness or wisdom, on account of the fact that they will be questioned [and then recompensed for their deeds], they are driven back from foolishness and made to desire wisdom. We ask Him to ennoble us with His success, that He render our resolve fit for His guidance, and that He enlighten our hearts with divine unity; for He is the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.

Now then: God Most High has created human beings for trial, in that He has made them capable of knowing and distinguishing the praiseworthy from the blameworthy. He has made the blameworthy distasteful, and what is praiseworthy pleasing, to their intellects. He has also made grievous (or distressing) in their minds the preference for evil over good, and the desire for what is blameworthy over what is praiseworthy. He calls them – in accordance with the original constitution and nobility of their nature – to prefer one over another; thus, He has made undertaking the one over the other repugnant to their intellects.

God has made all of what pertains to human beings fluctuate between a harm that is feared and a benefit that is desired, so that it would constitute for them knowledge of the promised outcome that is either to be desired or to be feared. And He has created human beings according to natures that avoid some things and incline toward others, and He has made them perceive in their intellects the good in some of what their nature avoids on account of those things' good outcomes, and the evil in some things toward which their nature inclines on account of those things' blameworthy outcomes. He has shaped human beings such that they will endure what is detestable to their natures for the sake of a pleasant outcome; and likewise, that they may resist that to which they are attracted on account of a bad end.

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<sup>1</sup> All Qur'an translations are taken from *The Study Quran*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al., New York NY: HarperOne, 2015.

ثمّ امتحنهم إذ أبت عقولهم احتمال أمثالها، ورغب في محاسن الأعمال ومكارم الأخلاق باختيار ما حسن من الأعمال واجتناب ما قبح من ذلك. ثمّ جعل ما فيه محنهم أمرين: العسير واليسير، والسهل والصعب؛ إذ هم بلا محنة يتعاطون الأمرين جمعياً، لما إليه مرجع ما أقدموا عليه وامتنعوا. وعلى ذلك جعل الأسباب التي بها التوصل لهم إلى الأصل الذي به يُرتقى إلى كلّ درجة ويُنال كلّ فضيلة. وهو العلم على وجهين: على الظاهر البين والخفيّ المستور، ليتفاضل بذلك أولوا العقل على قدر تفاضلهم في الاجتهاد واحتمال ما كرهته الطباع ونفرت عنه النفس.

وعلى ذلك جعل سبيله قسمين. أحدهما: العيان الذي هو أخصّ الأسباب، وهو الذي ليس معه جهل، ليكون أصلاً لما خفي منه. والثاني: السمع الذي عن دلالة الأعيان يعرف صدقه وكذبه. ثمّ جعل السمع قسمين: محكم ومتشابه ومفسّر ومبهم، ليبين منتهى المعارف من الكفّ فيما يجب ذلك والإقدام فيما يلزمه. ومن حمل المبهم على المفسّر ولزوم المحكم وعرض المتشابه عليه ما أمكن أن يكون ما فيه: ممّا يلزم تعرّفه وممّا إليه حاجة بأهل المحنة، أو تركّ الخوض في ذلك فيما أمكن الغناء عن تعرّف حقيقة ما فيه، فيكون محنة الوقوف؛ إذ لله تعالى أن يمتحن بوجهين: بالتسليم مرّة وبالطلب ثانياً، وإنّما على العبد الطاعة في قدر الأمر.

Thus has He tested human beings whereby their intellects scorn undertaking such affairs [i. e. that which is detestable to their natures], and He has awakened the desire for good works and noble character traits through the choosing of what is good, and the avoiding of that which is evil, from among possible acts. He has made that through which they are tested of two types: the burdensome and the easy, and the simple and the difficult. Human beings frequently encounter both of these types without any trial, because what is being referred to here are all those things which human beings readily engage in, and those which they naturally try to avoid. Accordingly, God has established the means by which they arrive at the principle by which one is raised to every degree and is granted every virtue. This (principle) is knowledge, which occurs in two aspects: the clearly manifest, and the hidden concealed. In this way the excellence of those who make use of their intellect occurs to the extent of their excellence in expending effort, and their enduring what is hateful to their nature and what is despised by their own selves.

Furthermore, God has made the way to knowledge of two types: the first being direct sensory perception, which is the most specific of the sources of knowledge and the one which cannot admit of ignorance, such that it forms a basis for the knowledge of even the things that remain hidden from it. The second is reported knowledge, whose truth or falsehood is known through the evidence of the senses. He has made reported knowledge to be of two types: the decisive<sup>2</sup> and the ambiguous, the elucidated and the obscure. This distinction exists to elucidate the limits of knowing with respect to those matters which require avoidance of investigation, and those which require further pursuit. This distinction also pertains to the application of the obscure [verses] according to the elucidated ones, and the overriding exigency of the decisive [verses], which necessitates the examination of the ambiguous verses in light of the decisive ones. (This distinction also pertains) to both: that which is necessary to know, and which all the people of trial feel a need to know; and that which necessitates refraining from further investigation, and which one does not feel a need to know the actual reality; the act of refraining from such investigation is itself a kind of test. Thus, the test of God the Most High may occur in two respects: through unquestioning acceptance [without knowledge of its reality on the one hand], and the effort to pursue [knowledge of the reality on the other]. Obedience is thus incumbent upon the human being in accordance with the [divine] command.

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<sup>2</sup> Verses of the Qur'an.



ولمّا جمع جلّ ثناؤه كتابه على الأمرين تعرّف الناس الذين أقرّوا بالكتاب أنّه حقّ من عند الله لا يسع العدول عنه، وأنّ من لزمه أفلح ونجا، ومن مال عنه شقى وخسر. حتّى ظنّ كلّ فريق أنّه قد أصاب المحكم من ذلك ولزمه، وأنّ عليه فيما ذهب إليه خصومه أن يقف في ذلك أو يحمله على ما تقرّر عنده فيما اعتقده. فالزم تفرّقهم [في] الحاجة كلّاً تعرّف المحكم من المتشابه [و] لزوم العلم بالمتشابه، لأن لا يناقض المحكم منه.

ثمّ معلوم أنّه لا يحتمل القرآن الاختلاف، وبه وصف الله أنّه ﴿وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾<sup>5</sup>. وفي العقل أنّ تناقض أدلّة من له الأدلّة هو دليل سفهه وجهله؛ فثبت بذلك أنّ الذي له تفرّقوا ليس من حيث القرآن، ولا لما ليس فيه بيان؛ بل دلّ تكليف الردّ إلى القرآن ولزوم اتّباعه على أنّ فيه بيان ذلك.

وإنّما خفي المحكم على من لم يبلغه لمعان: (١) إمّا لميل طبيعة الجوهر إلى [ما] يتلذّذ به؛ (٢) أو لإلف بعض ما اعتاده؛ (٣) أو لتقليد من وثق به؛ (٤) أو لتقصير في الطلب؛ (٥) أو لثقة منه بعقله أحبّ أن يسوّى عليه حكمة الربوبية دون أن أتبع عقله ما ألقي في سمعه فصار به المحكم عنده متشابهاً؛ (٦) أو لتقصير في البحث. إذ [هذه] الوجوه هي وجوه الشبهة على الذين عدلوا عن التوحيد على شهادة كلّية الأشياء له بذلك. ولا قوّة إلا بالله.

As God the Most Praised made His Book contain the two matters, it became known to those people who acknowledge the Book: that it is truth from God, there being no possibility of deviation from it; and that whoever adheres to it prospers and is saved, while whoever turns away from it is miserable and fails. Even so, each particular school of thought supposes that they have hit on the decisive meaning of the text and adhered to it, and that their opponent either hesitates in accepting the (decisive) meaning of the text, or bases their particular interpretation of the text merely on their own assumptions. Thus, the disagreement of the various schools of thought requires that they all distinguish the decisive (verses) from the ambiguous ones, and the necessity of knowledge concerning the ambiguous ones, so that they do not contradict decisive (verses) of it.

It is well-known that the Qur'an cannot contradict itself, as God Himself has indicated: 'Had it [i. e. the Qur'an] been from other than God, they would surely have found much discrepancy therein' [Q 4:82]. According to reason, contradiction of proofs for those (who claim to have) the proofs is evidence merely of their own foolishness and ignorance. It is therefore established that the disagreement of the various schools is neither due to the Qur'an itself, nor because it does not contain any clear explanation; rather, this indicates the obligation to refer to the Qur'an and adhere to its authority on account of the clear explanations therein.

The unambiguous verses may be concealed from the one who is unable to reach them for a number of reasons: (1) one's natural inclination toward what one finds pleasing, (2) becoming habituated to that to which one is accustomed, (3) the blind imitation of a trusted person, (4) inability to inquire, (5) finding the conclusions of one's own intellect more dear than reconciling it with God's wisdom, without subordinating one's intellect to what is encountered in revelation; thus making the unambiguous verses seem to be ambiguous, or (6) inability to investigate. These are the causes of the doubt of those who deviate from the [true doctrine of God's] oneness, despite the manifest witness of all (existence) to this [truth]. And there is no power but God's.

وأصل ذلك أنّ الله تعالى خلق البشر على طبائع تميل إلى الملاذّ الحاضرة، وتدعو صاحبها إليها، وتزنيها في عينه، بما ركب فيه من الشهوات إلى ما إليه ميل طبعه، وهي تنفر عمّا فيه ألمه وتعبه، فيصير طبعه أحد أعداء عقله في التحسين والتقبيح. وإن كان ما حسّنه العقل وقبحه ليس له زوال ولا تغيّر من حال إلى حال، وما حسّنته الطبيعة وقبحته هو في حدّ الانقلاب والتغيّر عن حال إلى حال بالرياضة والقيام على ذلك بالكفّ عمّا ألفه، والصرف إلى ما ينفر عنه بحسن القيام عليه على ما يحتمل الطبع قبوله، نحو المعروف من أمر الطيور والبهائم: إنّها بطبعها تنفر عمّا أريد بها من أنواع منافع البشر، ثمّ بحسن قيام أهل البصر بذلك يصير ممّا طبع عليه بالميل إليه كالمستوحش، وممّا طبع على النفار عنه كالمطبوع عليه. وعلى ذلك أمر نفار الطبع عن القتل والذبح في البشر، ثمّ سهولة ذلك عليه.

وما يدرك حسّنه بالعقل أو قبحه، فلا يزال يزداد على ما فيه إدراكه ببديهة الأحوال. ولذلك جعل الله العقول حجةً، لا ميل الطباع؛ إذ أجرى قلمه على أهلها، وإن شاركوا في الطباع غيرهم ممّن ليست لهم عقول سليمة، وألزم أهلها اتّباع ما أراهم العقل حسّنه وإن كان في الطبع النفار، واجتناب ما في العقل قبحه وإن كان في طبيعة الجوهر قبوله، إذ العقل يُري صاحبه على حقيقة ما عليه الشيء، والطبع - أعني طبع الجوهر - لا يوضّح ذلك.

The root of this issue is that God Most High has created humankind according to natures that incline to immediate delights, call their possessors to these (delights), and make these (pleasures) seem beautiful in their sight; He has thus fixed within human beings the passions toward which their disposition inclines. Moreover, these natures are averse to that which constitutes pain and exertion (on the part of human beings), and thus human beings' own nature becomes one of the enemies of their use of their own intellect in ascertaining the goodness and evilness of things. For that which the intellect ascertains to be good or evil never ceases to be so, and does not change from state to state. However, that which human nature ascertains to be good or evil is liable to alteration and change from one state to the next through practice and training, such as abstaining from that to which one is accustomed, or turning toward that to which one is averse, because one has effectively trained oneself to do this such that one's nature can bear it. Such is known to be the case with birds and beasts: they are by their very nature averse to the ways in which humans might wish to use them for their own benefit. But given certain training and experience, even actions that we find ourselves naturally averse to and repelled by may come to be experienced as natural by some people. For example, human beings are naturally averse to killing [one another] and to the slaughter [of animals], but (by habituation) these actions may become easy for them to commit.<sup>3</sup>

By contrast, the intellectual perception of what is good and what is evil increases in accuracy via insight into the various conditions of the perceptible world. For this reason, God has made the intellect a sure proof, rather than natural inclinations. He has therefore channelled His pen upon the people of intellect,<sup>4</sup> even though they share the same human nature as those who do not possess sound intellects, and He enjoins those people to adhere to that which the intellect shows them to be good, even if there were a natural aversion to it; and to avoid what is evil according to the intellect, even if there were a natural attraction to it. For the intellect causes its possessor to perceive the truth of the thing as it is, while the nature – and by this, I mean the natural disposition of a thing – does not make this clear.

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<sup>3</sup> In other words, one of the reasons that human beings' inclinations are poor guides to objective morality is the fact that even good inclinations can be forcibly changed: human beings can habituate themselves to committing objectively harmful acts, such as taking a life.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase 'people of intellect' here refers to people of sound mind and rationality, meaning people who are considered morally and religiously responsible for their actions.

إنَّ طبع الجوهر لا يُصَرَّ به ولا يُمَثَّل غيرُ الحاضر، والعقل يدرك به ما حضر وغاب، وبه يحضر على الطبع ما غاب، حتَّى يصير له كالشاهد ممَّا يكرهه ويتلذَّذ به، وعنده تسهل المحنة وتخفُّ مُؤَن الذي يكرهه الطبع. وعلى ذلك تقدير الكلام والعبارات: إنَّها وإن كانت تختلف في الحسن والقبح على الأسماع فإنَّها لا تغيَّر الحقوق إذ هي تتغيَّر. ويجوز أن تُؤدَّى عبارة واحدة بلسانين يكون أحدهما أحلى من الآخر. والحسن لنفسه أو الحق لا يختلف لاختلاف المعبرين. فلهذا لم يقدر حسن الأشياء بطبع الخلقة ولا بحسن العبارة، وإنَّما قدر بالعقل الذي لا يرى الحسن قبيحاً. وهو الأصل الذي يلزم تسوية كلِّ أمر من الأمور عليه. وذلك كعلم العيان الذي لا يحتمل التغيَّر، ولا يناقضه جهل، فيكون هو أصلاً لكلِّ خفيٍّ مستورٍ، وكذلك أمر العقل وما أراه أصلٌ لكلِّ أمر مطبوع.

ولما بيَّنا من مخالفة الطبائع في التزيين العقول وفي التقبيح تعذر على كثير من الخلق إدراك ما أراهم العقل والطبع، فصار بذلك المحكَّم عندهم في صورة المتشابه، والمتشابه في صورة المحكَّم، وهكذا أريد درك كلِّ شيء بغير سبيله. فنسأل الله أن يعصمنا عن رؤية الباطل بصورة الحقِّ، والحقِّ بصورة الباطل، فإنَّه قويٌّ مدبِّر قدير.

Nothing is perceived or represented by the natural disposition of a thing except that which is immediately apparent. However, both the apparent and the hidden can be perceived by means of the intellect, by means of which the hidden becomes apparent to a thing's natural disposition, in the same way that someone directly perceives what is hateful or pleasing to them. For the intellect, trial is easy and the burdens that are hateful to the disposition are easily borne. Speech and expressions are evaluated in the same way: though these may exhibit variance to the ears when referring to good and evil, good and evil do not change in their essences simply because expressions for them change. For though it is perfectly possible that one expression may be conveyed more sweetly in one language than in another, goodness itself or its essential nature does not differ due to the variance in how it may be expressed. It is for this reason that the goodness of things is ascertained neither by means of the natural dispositions of created beings, nor by beauty of expression. Instead, it is ascertained by the intellect, which never perceives goodness as evil. This is a general principle that must be applied to any issue. In this way the intellect is similar to direct sensory perception, which does not admit of change and which ignorance cannot contradict, for it forms a basis for the knowledge of even the things that remain hidden and concealed from it. In exactly the same way, the intellect perceives the essential principle of that which is experienced as natural.

We have thus explained the disparity between natures and intellects in the ascertainment of good and evil that renders it impossible for a great many people to distinguish between what their intellect and their natural disposition presents to them. In this way the unambiguous appears to them in the guise of the ambiguous, and the ambiguous in the guise of the unambiguous, and thus the attempt is made to perceive things in ways unbefitting to them. We ask God to protect us from seeing the false in the guise of the true, and the true in the guise of the false, for indeed He is mighty, arranger and determiner of [affairs].

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## Knowledge of Good and Evil

‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a al-Thānī  
al-Maḥbūbī al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346), *al-Tawḍīḥ*  
*fī ḥall ghawāmiḍ al-Tanqīḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*

PHILIPP BRUCKMAYR

‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a al-Thānī al-Maḥbūbī al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346) was the foremost Māturīdī theologian of his time and, arguably, the school’s last major representative from its native region, Transoxania. Interestingly, however, he authored no *kalām* work proper. Instead, his own highly original contributions to Māturīdī thought are hidden in his encyclopedia of the sciences, *Ta’dīl al-‘ulūm*, as well as in his major work on legal theory, *al-Tawḍīḥ*, which is a commentary on his *al-Tanqīḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*. The section below is a prime example of the convergence of specific questions of *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* in Ḥanafī-Māturīdī works on legal theory. Devoted to the question of the nature of good and evil, and its implications for legal theory, the following extract is of particular relevance because it represents the first sophisticated Māturīdī engagement with the paradigm-shifting contributions of the Ash‘arī luminary Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) to the sciences of *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

In the selected text from *al-Tawḍīḥ fī ḥall ghawāmiḍ al-Tanqīḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh* (‘The Clarification for Solving the Difficulties in *The Revision in Legal Theory*’)<sup>1</sup> Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a al-Thānī first discusses the relevance of the question of the nature of good and evil for legal theory, and its intimate connection to the question of free will and predestination. After introducing different scholarly definitions of good and evil, including Ash‘arī and Mu‘tazilī approaches, he focuses specifically on the Ash‘arī claim that good and evil can only be known through revelation and not through reason, a view which is disputed by the Māturīdiyya. He thus sets out to present the two bases of the Ash‘arī view, namely that human acts are not intrinsically good or evil, and that humans are not acting by exercising their free choice (*ikhtiyār*), both of which he rejects. Whereas he swiftly refutes the first of these premises, his discussion of the second is highly elaborate and

<sup>1</sup> ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a al-Thānī al-Maḥbūbī al-Bukhārī, *al-Tawḍīḥ fī ḥall ghawāmiḍ al-Tanqīḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, in the margin of Sa’d al-Dīn Mas‘ūd ibn ‘Umar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Talwīḥ ‘alā al-Tawḍīḥ*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, (s. d.), pp. 172–6.



unprecedented among the Māturīdiyya. Indeed, the Ash'arī rejection of free will as he presents it, is none other than the famous preponderator (*murajjih*)<sup>2</sup> argument introduced by al-Rāzī, according to which the preponderator needed by a human to act rather than not to act, or to choose between two possible actions, can only be derived from God and not from human free will.

Thus, Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī endeavours to illustrate the inconsistencies in al-Rāzī's argument in a highly philosophical discussion, which has become widely known and commented upon as a kind of separate work, entitled *al-Muq-addimāt al-arba'a* ('The Four Premises'). In the first of these four prolegomena, which appears at the very end of this extract, the author additionally links the discussions of good and evil and human volition to two other debates with the Ash'ariyya, i. e. those about the divine attribute of bringing-into-existence (*takwīn*) and about the distinction between the latter and the thing brought into existence (*mukawwan*).

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<sup>2</sup> The preponderator (*murajjih*) is the outweighing element of any decision between acting or non-acting, or between two possible actions. In addition, in cosmological terms, a *murajjih* is needed to tip the scale between being and non-being for a thing to become existent.

[Selected text begins on the following page]

### ”فصل لا بدّ للمأمور به من الحسن“

هذه المسئلة من أمّهات مسائل الأصول ومهمّات مباحث المعقول والمنقول، ومع ذلك هي مبنية على مسئلة الجبر والقدر الذي زلّت في بواديها أقدام الراسخين وضلّت في مبادئها أفهام المتفكّرين وغرقت في بحارها عقول المتبحّرين، وحقيقة الحقّ فيها أعني إلحاق بين طرفي الإفراط والتفريط سرّ من أسرار الله تعالى التي لا يطلع عليها إلا خواصّ عباده، وها أنا بمعزل عن ذلك لكن أوردت مع العجز عن درك الإدراك قدوماً وقفت عليه ووفّقت لإيراده.

اعلم أنّ العلماء قد ذكروا أنّ الحسن والقبح يطلقان على ثلاثة معان. الأوّل: كون الشيء ملائماً للطبع ومنافراً له. والثاني: كونه صفةً كمالٍ وكونه صفةً نقصانٍ. والثالث: كون الشيء متعلّق المدح عاجلاً والثواب أجلاً وكونه متعلّق الذمّ عاجلاً والعقاب أجلاً.

فالحسن والقبح بالمعنيين الأوّلين يثبتان بالعقل اتّفاقاً، أمّا بالمعنى الثالث فقد اختلفوا فيه فعند الأشعري لا يثبتان بالعقل بل بالشرع فقط. وهذا بناء على أمرين. أحدهما: أنّهما ليسا لذات الفعل، وليس للفعل صفة يحسن الفعل أو يقبح لأجلها عند الأشعري. وثانيهما: أنّ فعل العبد ليس باختياره عنده فلا يوصف بالحسن والقبح، ومع ذلك جوّز كونه متعلّق الثواب والعقاب بالشرع بناء على أنّ عنده لا يقبح من الله تعالى أن يثيب العبد أو يعاقبه على ما ليس باختياره، لأنّ الحسن والقبح لا ينسبان إلى أفعال الله تعالى عنده.

### Section: What has been commanded is necessarily good

This issue pertains to the major problems of legal theory and the important investigation into what is known through reason and what is known through transmission.<sup>3</sup> As such, it is based on the question of compulsion and predestination, in whose territory [even] the feet of those firmly rooted [in knowledge] slip, and regarding the principles of which the minds of the thinkers go astray, and in whose oceans the intellects of those deeply immersed drown. The essential truth therein, i. e. the balance between the two extremes of excess<sup>4</sup> and neglect,<sup>5</sup> is one of the secrets of God the Exalted, which are not divulged except to His selected servants. Behold, even though I am far from it [i. e. from being among this group of His elect], and despite my inability to attain [a full] perception, I am presenting this topic as far as I have understood it and have been enabled to expound upon it.

Know that the scholars have referred to good and evil in three different senses: firstly, the property of the thing in relation to what is either agreeable to [human] nature or incompatible with it; secondly, its property as either an attribute of completeness or deficiency; thirdly, the property of the thing in relation to immediate [i. e. this-worldly] praise and later reward [i. e. in the hereafter] or in relation to immediate reprimand and later punishment.

In the first two senses good and evil are unanimously established through reason. In the third sense, however, there is disagreement over it. According to the Ash'arīs,<sup>6</sup> they cannot be established through reason but only through revelation. This is based on two claims. According to the first of these, neither of the two [i. e. good and evil] is intrinsic to the act, and for the Ash'arīs the act therefore does not have an [inherent] quality rendering it either good or evil. Secondly, the act of the human being is – according to them – not by his free choice and thus not [a priori] characterised as either good or evil. Therefore, they hold it to be possible that its property depends on reward and punishment [as specified] by revelation. This rests on their assumption that it is not evil for God the Exalted to either reward or punish the servant for what he has not done by his own free choice, because – according to them – [the categories of] good and evil do not apply to the actions of God the Exalted.

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<sup>3</sup> i. e. revelation.

<sup>4</sup> i. e. the doctrine of human compulsion.

<sup>5</sup> i. e. the doctrine that humans themselves are the creators of their acts.

<sup>6</sup> The author uses al-Ash'arī, which could be understood either as a reference to Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/936) or to one of his followers (i. e. a given Ash'arī). As most of the author's discussion in this section is engaged with the thought of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, it should be taken as a generic reference to the Ash'ariyya rather than one specifically to Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī.

فالحسن والقبیح بالمعنى الثالث يكونان عند الأشعري بمجرد كون الفعل مأموراً به ومنهياً عنه. فلهذا قال: "فالحسن عند الأشعري ما أمر به" سواء كان الأمر للإيجاب أو الإباحة أو الندب، "والقبیح ما نهى عنه" سواء كان النهي للتحريم أو للكرهية. "وعند المعتزلة ما يحمد على فعله" سواء كان يحمد عليه شرعاً أو عقلاً، وهذا تفسير الحسن، "وما يذم على فعله" هذا تفسير القبیح. "وبتفسير الآخر: ما يكون للقادر العالم بحاله أن يفعله" احتراز بالقيدين عن فعل المضطرّ والمجنون، وهذا تفسير آخر للحسن.

فإنّ المعتزلة فسّروا الحسن والقبیح بتفسيرين، فالحسن بالتفسير الأوّل يختصّ بالوجوب والمندوب، بالتفسير الثاني يتناول المباح أيضاً. "وما ليس له ذلك" أي القبیح ما ليس للقادر العالم بحاله أن يفعله. فكلا تفسيري القبیح متساويان لا يتناولان إلا الحرام والمكروه. فعلى التفسير الأوّل للحسن المباح واسطة بين الحسن والقبیح، وعلى الثاني لا واسطة بينهما.

"فعند الأشعري لا يثبتان إلا بالأمر والنهي" لما ذكرت أنّ هذا الحكم مبني عنده على أصلين أوردت على مذهبه دليلين لإثبات الأصلين. أمّا الأوّل فقوله: "لأنّهما ليسا لذات الفعل أو لصفة له وإلا يلزم قيام العرض وضعفه ظاهر" أي ضعف هذا الدليل ظاهر، لأنّه إن عني بقيام العرض بالعرض اتّصافه به فلا نسلم امتناعه، فإنّه واقع كقولنا: هذه الحركة سريعة أو بطيئة، على أنّ قيام العرض بالعرض بهذا المعنى لازم، على تقدير كونهما شرعيين أيضاً نحو هذا الفعل حسن شرعاً أو قبیح شرعاً. [...]

In the third sense, good and evil are, for the Ash'arīs, solely based on whether one has been either commanded to perform a given act or has been prohibited from it. It is in this regard, that I have said: 'The good for the Ash'arīs is what has been commanded',<sup>7</sup> no matter whether in the form of command, permission, or recommendation. And 'the bad is what has been forbidden', whether through prohibition or disapproval. And further: 'Among the Mu'tazila it constitutes those acts for which one is praised', whether praised by revelation or reason. This is their interpretation of the good, just as 'those acts for which one is reproached' is their interpretation of the bad. 'Or, following another interpretation, [only] that which one performs, while being capable of it and knowledgeable about its status [as good or bad]', to the exclusion of acts of compulsion or insanity. This is thus another definition of the good.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, the Mu'tazila interprets the good and the bad in a twofold manner. According to the first interpretation, the good concerns the obligatory and the recommended. Following the second, it also includes the permissible. And what is not encompassed by it, [is the other]', i. e. the bad, which one, while being capable of it and knowledgeable about its status, would never perform [as it would be unreasonable]. Both interpretations of the bad are alike as they include only the forbidden and the reprehensible. Thus, according to the first definition of the good, the permissible lies in the middle between the good and the bad, while according to the second, there is no such middle ground between them [i. e. it includes the permissible].

'According to the Ash'arīs, the two can only be known through command and prohibition'. As I have noted, they base this rule on two principles and I have put forward two proofs against their view regarding the conclusiveness of these principles. Regarding the first one, we said: 'because [they hold that] the two [i. e. good and evil] are not intrinsic to the act nor to any of its attributes, or else they would necessarily subsist in an accident, and its weakness is evident'. That is, the weakness of this proof is obvious, because if they mean by that the subsistence of the accident in another accident characterising it [as good or evil], then we do not agree that this is impossible. Actually, it happens, as in our saying: 'This movement is fast or slow', given the subsistence of the accident [i. e. the quality of being fast or slow] in the [other] accident [i. e. movement]. In this sense, it is also inseparable from the stipulation of their property through revelation, that is, that the given act is [characterised as] either good or bad through revelation. [...]

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<sup>7</sup> Passages in quotation marks represent parts of his original work *al-Tanqīh*, on which the author here comments, speaking of himself (as the author) in the third person.

<sup>8</sup> That an act is only considered good if one is capable of effecting it voluntarily and knowledgeable about its implications.

وأما الثاني فقولُه: "ولأنَّ فاعل القبيح إن لم يتمكَّن من تركه ففعله اضطراريّ، وإن تمكَّن فإن لم يتوقَّف على مرجِّح كان اتِّفاقياً، وإن توقَّف يجب عنده، لأنَّ فرضناه مرجِّحاً تامّاً ولئلاَّ يترجَّح المرجوح ولا يكون المرجِّح باختياره لئلاَّ يتسلسل فيكون اضطراريّاً، والاضطراريّ والاتِّفائيّ لا يوصفان بهما اتِّفاقاً". [...]

واعلم أنَّ كثيراً من العلماء اعتقدوا هذا الدليل يقينياً، والبعض الذي لا يعتقدونه يقينياً لم يوردوا على مقدّماته منعاً يمكن أن يقال إنّه شيء، وقد خفي على كلّ الفريقين مواقع الغلط فيه. وأنا أسمعك ما سنح لخطري، وهذا مبني على أربع مقدّمات.

المقدّمة الأولى: أنَّ الفعل يراد به المعنى الذي وضع المصدر بإزائه ويمكن أن يراد به المعنى الحاصل بالمصدر، فإنّه إذا تحرّك زيد فقد قامت الحركة بزيد، فإن أريد بالحركة الحالة التي تكون للمتحرّك في أيّ جزء يفرض من أجزاء المسافة فهي المعنى الثاني، وإن أريد بها إيقاع تلك الحالة فهي المعنى الأوّل، والمعنى الثاني موجود في الخارج، أما الأوّل فأمر يعتبره العقل ولا وجود له في الخارج، إذ لو كان لكان له موقع ثمّ إيقاع ذلك الإيقاع يكون واقعاً إلى ما لا يتناهى فيلزم التسلسل في طرف المبدأ في الأمور الواقعة في الخارج وهو محال، ولأنّه يلزم أنّه إذا أوقع الفاعل شيئاً واحداً أوجد أموراً غير متناهية وهذا بديهى الاستحالة على أنّ كون الإيقاع أمراً غير موجود في الخارج أظهر على مذهب الأشعري، فإنّ التكوين عنده أمر غير موجود في الخارج.

As far as the second principle is concerned, they say: ‘because if the committer of an evil had not been able to desist from it, then his act was compulsory. If he would, however, have been able to, and it was not based on a preponderator, then it must have been mere coincidence. And if it had been dependent upon one, then it must have happened necessarily, because we are assuming a complete preponderator, and it would be impossible for the non-preponderant to prevail. This preponderator cannot be derived from [human] free choice, as this would lead to an infinite regress [as a human act as preponderator would necessitate another preponderator to bring it about]. Thus, the act must have been compulsory [i. e. with the preponderator emanating from God]. Yet, it is unanimously agreed that neither the compulsory nor the coincidental can be characterised accordingly [as either good or bad]. [...]

Know that many scholars hold this proof to be certain. The few who do not consider it to be certain have not responded to its premises with anything to speak of, as the erroneous positions in it have been unknown among both groups [i. e. Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs]. I will now let you know what has come to my mind in this regard, and this will be based on four premises.

First premise: ‘Act’ can be used in the sense of the root-principle [or verbal noun] expressed by it, or in the sense of the product of the root-principle [i. e. the coming into existence of a given act]. If Zayd moves, this movement has been effected in him. But if we mean by ‘movement’ the state of the person who moves along any assumed part of a distance, then this is the second meaning. If we, however, mean the production of this state with it, then this is the first meaning. In the second sense it exists in the physical world, but in the former the thing is [merely] of a conceptual nature and is thus inexistent in the physical world. If it were to be manifest [in the physical world], then we would have to assume a [prior] production of this production and so forth without ending. This would necessarily lead to an infinite regress on the level of the actual things of the physical world. This is absurd, because it would necessitate that an endless number of things had to be produced for the actor to produce just one single thing. This is a priori an impossibility, given that the fact of the production of an [hitherto] inexistent thing in the physical world is known in the Ash‘arī school, whereas the [divine attribute of] bringing into existence is for them inexistent in the physical world.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This distinction within the act between its production and its state is related to two other major points of contention between the schools, namely the Māturīdī doctrine of the eternal divine attribute of *takwīn* (bringing into existence) and the related distinction between *takwīn* and *mukawwan*, both of which Ash‘arism rejects.



[The remaining three premises upon which Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī builds his refutation of late Ashʿarī doctrine, can be summarised as follows:

Second premise: The existence of any logically possible thing or act (*kull mumkin*) necessarily depends on a cause (*ʿilla*) through which this thing or act necessarily exists. Thus, the existence of such a cause, or more precisely the existence of the totality of elements on which the existence of the possible thing or act depends, renders its existence not a possibility but a necessity. In the case of the inexistence of such a totality, the existence of the possible thing or act is an impossibility.

Third premise: In accordance with the distinction between the two components of any act outlined in the first premise (i. e. the state of movement, which exists in the physical world, and the production of the state, which does not), this totality of elements, on which the existence of an act depends, necessarily includes elements of a merely conceptual nature (*al-umūr al-iqāfiyya*). The latter are, accordingly, neither existent nor inexistent, and include, among others, the production or existention of the act (*īqāʿ*) and human choice (*ikhtiyār*).

Fourth premise: Whereas nothing can exist without its necessary cause, the production of an act, which – as was outlined in the preceding premise – represents a conceptual element that is neither existent nor inexistent, can occur without such a cause rendering its existence a necessity. Thus, a decision may not always depend on a preponderator (*murajjih*), as, for instance, in a decision between two undetermined (i. e. equal) options, neither of which is preponderant nor non-preponderant. Conversely, decisions between an ultimately preponderant and a non-preponderant option, do necessitate a preponderator, which, however, is derived from human volition and not divine decree.]

## Bibliography

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Şadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī al-Maḥbūbī al-Bukhārī, 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, *al-Tawḍīḥ fī ḥall ghawāmiḍ al-Tanqīḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, in the margin of Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd ibn 'Umar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Talwīḥ 'alā al-Tawḍīḥ*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, (s. d.), pp. 172–6.



## Evil and Divine Wisdom

Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Kamāl/Kemalpaşazâde (d. 940/1534),  
*Risāla fī bayān al-ḥikma li-'adam nisbat al-sharr ilayhi ta'ālā*

TIM WINTER

The author of this treatise, here translated in its entirety,<sup>1</sup> was the Ottoman chief jurist (*şeyhülislam*, *shaykh al-Islām*) Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Kamāl (Kemalpaşazâde) (d. 940/1534). A former cavalryman, this active and versatile Ottoman judge and professor composed some two hundred books in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, including works of history, poetry, Islamic law and several influential texts on the Arabic and Persian languages.<sup>2</sup> His primary interest, however, seems to have been metaphysics, a field in which the Ottoman intelligentsia found itself challenged by alternative ontologies. Heirs to a Māturīdī-Ḥanafī tradition to which our author himself claims allegiance,<sup>3</sup> the Ottoman thinkers seldom hesitated to adopt or at least commend many later Ash'arī positions; indeed, their favourite theology textbook was Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's (d. 792/1390) (Ash'arī) commentary on Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī's (d. 537/1142) (Māturīdī) *Kitāb al-'Aqā'id*, a *summa* to which they frequently added Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī's 493/1100) *Uşūl al-Dīn*, a broadly Māturīdī text which showed considerable respect for Ash'arī approaches. Ottoman thinkers were fond of assembling lists of disputes or commonalities between the two schools, and were usually very comfortable with a culture of theological borrowing and syncretism;<sup>4</sup> Kemalpaşazâde himself penned a work in this comparative genre.<sup>5</sup>

A crux of the dispute between early Ḥanafī and Qadarī dogmatists had been the enigma of free will and the compatibility of God's justice with His power and

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<sup>1</sup> Shams al-Dīn ibn Kamāl, *Risāla fī bayān al-ḥikma li-'adam nisbat al-sharr ilayhi ta'ālā*, in *Rasā'il Ibn Kamāl*, Istanbul: İqdām, 1316 AH (1898), vol. 1, pp. 125–30.

<sup>2</sup> (Nihal) Atsız, "Kemalpaşa-oğlu'nun Eserleri", *Şarkiyat Mecmuası*, 6 (1966), pp. 71–112, and 7 (1972), pp. 83–135.

<sup>3</sup> Shams al-Dīn ibn Kamāl, *Risāla al-Munīra*, Istanbul: Şaḥḥāf Aḥmad Efendi, 1296 AH (1879), pp. 13, 18.

<sup>4</sup> 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Uthmān Mestçizâde, *al-Masālik fī l-khilāfiyyāt*, ed. Seyit Bahçivan, Istanbul: İrshād, 1428/2007, pp. 188–93.

<sup>5</sup> Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Kamāl, *Masā'il al-ikhtilāf bayn al-Ash'ā'ira wa-l-Māturīdiyya*, ed. Sa'īd Fawda, Amman: Dār al-Fatḥ, 1430/2009.

foreknowledge. On this the Māturīdīs are often seen as closer to Mu'tazilī ideas than their Ash'arī rivals, but simple assertions of a Māturīdī 'rationalism' ignore the diversity of Māturīdism and the rigour of natural theology in later Ash'arī thought. Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) had himself devoted much of his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* to the problem of free will and the related issues of theodicy. God cannot be guilty of *jabr*, he believed, of simply creating actions for which He then condemns humans; but neither is He ignorant of the future, or partially able. God's will (*mashī'a*) can be wisely other than His command (*amr*), as when He commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, knowing the outcome in advance,<sup>6</sup> for God always acts according to a wisdom (*ḥikma*) which humans may not discern.

Kemalpaşazâde's treatise is broadly in line with this Māturīdī assumption that God's justice is real and intrinsic. His main treatment of human freedom appears elsewhere,<sup>7</sup> but in the present text he focuses on the sub-argument which pointedly asks why in many scriptural texts evil (*sharr*) is not attributed to the omnipotent God in the way goodness is. Māturīdī had himself begun his own long wrestling with the free will paradox by raising the puzzle of the creation of sinners and disbelievers which had figured prominently in early debates with Mu'tazilism.<sup>8</sup> Characteristic of this Māturīdī tradition is Kemalpaşazâde's emphasis on Divine free choice (*ikhtiyār*) and wisdom (*ḥikma*), both of which are real, although obscure; there is no statement of a divine command theory. The Māturīdī argument which holds that the non-attribution of evil to God is essentially out of courtesy to Him<sup>9</sup> does not appear, however; and the compatibilist Māturīdī and Ash'arī idea of *kasb*, the human 'acquisition' of actions created by God, is barely cited.

The author's central argument is transcendentalist and aporetic: God's *ḥikma* controls a universe of perfection (*itqān*), evident in the transcendent world (*malakūt*) but which to those who inhabit the human material plane (*mulk*) is only imperfectly perceived. As Māturīdī had said, God's *ḥikma* has placed everything in its due place,<sup>10</sup> and this must include misguidance and suffering. This transcendentalism, which insists on the inadequacy of human perception and judgement, is strongly supported in the Persian poetic tradition, which Kemalpaşazâde knows well. Even more noticeably the author borrows extensively from Ibn 'Arabī's metaphysics, not to supplant *kalām*, but to offer a further perspective. For Ibn 'Arabī, the world lies between existence and nonexistence, and

<sup>6</sup> Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi, Ankara: İSAM, 2005, p. 485.

<sup>7</sup> For instance in his *Risāla fī l-jabr wa-l-qadar* (*Rasā'il Ibn Kamāl*, vol. 1, pp. 158–85).

<sup>8</sup> Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, pp. 486–514.

<sup>9</sup> Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunna*, ed. Fāṭima al-Khīmī, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1425/2004, vol. 1, pp. 458–9.

<sup>10</sup> Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, p. 170.

*sharr* is a synonym for the latter; it is no more than perspectival, which is why in a certain sense it is not ascribed 'to Him'. Manifestation obliges differentiation, and the differentia (*ta'ayyunāt*) are qualified by Divine names, which reduce to Mercy (*rahma*) but express the fullness of possibility in establishing Rigour (*jalāl*) as well as Beauty (*jamāl*) in entities whose receptivity (*isti'dād*) is defined in relation to them. Evil is, thus, an intrinsic aspect of entities' apparent distance from the Real. One of Ibn 'Arabī's major discussions of this significantly takes its cue from the same hadith with which Kemalpaşazâde begins his treatise.<sup>11</sup>

The text thus presents the complex maturity of Ottoman metaphysics: by this period not only have the later Māturīdī and Ash'arī schools been brought into a nuanced conversation, but the very different ontology of Ibn 'Arabī has been seriously integrated as well.

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<sup>11</sup> '[...] and evil is not [ascribed] to You', Muḥyi l-Dīn ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Cairo: (s. n.), 1329/1911, vol. 3, p. 528.

## رسالة في بيان الحكمة لعدم نسبة الشرّ إليه تعالى

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
الحمد لله الذي أحسن خلق مصنوع وأتقن صنع كلّ شيء، والصلاة على محمّد  
المبعوث من أشرف قبيلة وأفضل حيّ المنعوت بالفضل على كلّ حيّ.

أمّا بعد فهذه رسالة معمولّة في بيان سرّ عدم نسبة الشرّ إلى الله تعالى. فنقول، ومن الله  
التوفيق وييده أزمة التحقيق، ثبت في صحيح مسلم أنّ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلّم  
كان يقول في دعاء الاستفتاح: "لبيك وسعديك، والخير في يديك، والشرّ ليس إليك"  
تجاوز عن القوّة المتصرّفة.

ولا يخفى وجه التجوّز على من له قدمٌ راسخٌ في علم البيان، وتنتبها باعتبار تنوّع التصرّف  
في العالمين: عالم الشهادة المسمّى بعالم الملوك وعالم الغيب المسمّى بعالم الملوكوت.  
ومن ههنا اتّضح وجه قوله تعالى: ﴿مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتَ بِيَدَيَّ﴾<sup>12</sup> على قراءة  
التشديد أي لما خلقته ذا حظّ من عالمي الملك والملوكوت، وفيه إشارة إلى جهة فضل آدم  
عليه السلام على المأمورين بالسجود له ممّن لا حظّ لهم من أحد العالمين المذكورين.

وإنّما قال: "والشرّ ليس إليك" ولم يقل: والشرّ ليس منك، لأنّ وجوده منه ضرورة أنّه لا  
يوجد إلّا هو، إلّا أنّه ليس شرّاً بالنسبة إليه تعالى، وإنّما ذلك بالنسبة إلى غيره، والإضافة  
إلى ما سواه، وعلى هذا ورد قوله تعالى: ﴿بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾<sup>13</sup> حيث  
لم يقل بيدك الخير والشرّ بل خصّ الخير بالذكر في مقام النسبة إليه تعالى، وذكر الشيء  
العام للشرّ أيضاً في بيان مقام تناول قدرته لما له صلاحية المقدورية.

<sup>12</sup> سورة ص ٣٨/٧٥.

<sup>13</sup> سورة آل عمران ٣/٢٦.

## A Treatise Expounding the Wisdom in Not Attributing Evil to God the Exalted

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God, Who excellently made creation and perfected the fashioning of all things. May blessings rest upon Muḥammad, he who was sent from the noblest tribe and the best of clans, and is characterised by a merit superior to that of every other living thing.

To proceed. This is a treatise written to expound the secret reason for the non-attribution of evil to God the Exalted. We say – and success is from Him and in His hand lie the reins of true ascertaining – that it is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim that God's Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, used to say in the prayer with which he began his worship: 'At Your service, at Your felicitous command; the good is in Your two hands, and evil is not [ascribed] to You,'<sup>14</sup> [implying] a disregarding of agency.

Now, the modality of this disregarding is not hidden from anyone who has a sturdy foothold in the discipline of rhetoric: the dual number in the expression is there to take into account the heterogeneity of Divine agency in the two worlds, which are the World of Witnessing, which is also known as the 'World of Sovereignty' (*mulk*), and the World of the Unseen, which is called the 'World of the Kingdom' (*malakūt*). Thus is the sense of His word the Exalted, 'What prevents you [the Devil] from prostrating to that [Adam] which I created with My two hands?' [Q 38:75], if we follow the variant reading which doubles the final consonant,<sup>15</sup> which is to say, 'that which I created to be in possession of a share of the two worlds, of Sovereignty and of the Kingdom.' This contains an indication of the merit of Adam, upon him be peace, over those [angels] who are being commanded to prostrate to him, who have no share in either of the two aforementioned worlds.

[The Prophet] said 'Evil is not [ascribed] to You' rather than 'Evil is not from You' only because its being is necessarily from Him, given that He alone has being; however it is not evil in relation to Him the Exalted but only in relation to others, being referenced to what is not Him. This is why God the Exalted says: 'In Your hand is the good; verily You are Powerful over everything' [Q 3:26] instead of 'In Your hand is the good and the evil'; in fact, He singled out the good for mention in that it exists in relation to Him, and mentioned a general 'everything' when referring to evil, in explaining the extent of His power's reach, as He [alone] possesses the capacity which subjects things to His decree.

<sup>14</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, "Musāfirīn", 201.

<sup>15</sup> Reading *yadayy*, 'My two hands', instead of *yadī*, 'My hand'. The author's interpretation here reflects that of Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, vol. 2, pp. 3–4.



وتحقيق هذا الكلام أن الله تعالى ﴿خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾<sup>16</sup>، فهو الخالق للعباد وما صدر عنهم وظهر منهم من الأفعال والأقوال. والعبد إذا فعل القبيح المنهني عنه كان قد فعل الشرّ والسوء، والربّ تعالى هو الذي جعله فاعلاً لذلك، وهذا الجعل منه تعالى عدل وحكمة وصواب، فجعله فاعلاً خير وحسن والمفعول شرّ وقبيح، فهو سبحانه بهذا الجعل قد وضع الشيء موضعه لما له في ذلك من الحكمة البالغة التي يحمد عليها، فهو خير وحكمة ومصلحة وإن كان وقوعه من العبد عيباً ونقصاً وشرّاً.

وهذا أمر معقول في الشاهد، فإنّ الصانع الخبير إذا أخذ الخشبة العوجاء والحجر المكسور واللبنة الناقصة فوضع ذلك في موضع يليق به ويناسبه كان ذلك منه عدلاً وصواباً يمدح به، وإن كان في المحلّ عوج ونقص وعيب نذّم به المحلّ. ومن وضع الخبائث في موضعها ومحلّها اللائق بها كان ذلك حكمةً وعدلاً وصواباً. وإنّما السفه والظلم أن يضعها في غير محلّها اللائق بها، فمن وضع العمامة على الرأس والنعل في الرجل والكحل في العين والزبالة في الكناسة فقد وضع الشيء في موضعه ولم يظلم النعل والزبالة إذ بهذا محلّها.

وبهذا التفصيل انكشف الحجاب عن وجه الجواب الذي ذكرناه في تفسير قوله تعالى: ﴿مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ﴾<sup>17</sup> حيث قلنا: فإن قلت السيئة من الله تعالى خلقاً كالْحَسَنَةِ وَالْحَسَنَةِ من العبد كسباً كالسَّيِّئَةِ فما وجه الفرق بينهما، قلت إنّ السَّيِّئَةَ من حيث أنّها سَيِّئَةٌ لا نسبة لها إلى الله تعالى. وقد ورد في الخبر أنّ إدريس عليه السلام قال: "اللّهُ هو المَحْمُودُ في جَمِيعِ فَعَالِهِ، حَاشَاكَ حَاشَاكَ، يَا رُوحِي فَدَاكَ، مِنْ فَعَلٍ قَبِيحٍ يَنَافِي وَجْهَكَ الْحَسَنَاءَ".

<sup>16</sup> سورة الزمر ٦٢/٣٩.

<sup>17</sup> سورة النساء ٧٩/٤.

The truth of this statement is ascertained by the fact that God the Exalted is 'Creator of every thing' [Q 39:62], and is thus the Creator of His servants and the words and deeds which proceed and appear from them. The servant, when he performs an ugly and forbidden action, has done something evil and wicked, and it is indeed the Lord Who made him the agent of that act; but this 'making' by Him the Exalted is just, wise and correct; so that His making him the agent is good and beautiful even though the action itself remains evil and ugly. By this 'making' He the Sublime has set affairs in their due place, insofar as in this there is an utmost wisdom which is praiseworthy; and (His 'making') is thus good, wise, and useful, even though the action's proceeding from the servant comprises a fault, a defect, and a wickedness.

This is something which may be understood from observation. When a skilled craftsman takes a crooked length of wood, a broken rock, and a deficient piece of brick, and places these things in a fitting and appropriate position, this comprises a just, right, and praiseworthy action, even if the site still contains a crookedness, inadequacy, and flaw by which we condemn it. So too he who places ordure in its due and suitable place has acted wisely, justly, and correctly. Foolishness and injustice would obtain only were he to put them in a place which was wrong for them. In this way someone who places a turban on his head, sandals on his feet, and antimony in his eyes, and puts rubbish on the refuse-pile, has placed everything in its due place, and has committed no wrong against the sandal and the rubbish, since they have gone to their rightful locations.

By detailing the matter in this way the veil is lifted from the face of the answer, which we have discussed [elsewhere] in our commentary on His saying, 'Whatever good touches you is from God, and whatever misfortune touches you is from yourself' [Q4:79] where we wrote: 'Should you say: "The misfortune is God's, the Exalted, as a creation, just like the good, and the good is the human's, as an acquisition (*kasb*), just like the misfortune; so in what way are they to be differentiated?" I would reply: "The misfortune, *qua* misfortune, has no relation to God the Exalted."' <sup>18</sup> It has been narrated in a report that Idris, upon him be peace, said: 'God is praiseworthy in all His actions. Far be it from You, far be it from You, may my soul be Your ransom, that You should do something ugly which would contradict the beauty of Your face!'

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<sup>18</sup> The author may be referring to his Qur'anic commentary, where the same point about *kasb* is made but expressed differently. See Shams al-Dīn ibn Kamāl, *Tafsīr Ibn Kamāl Bāshā*, ed. Māhir Habbūsh, Istanbul: al-Irshād, 1439/2018, vol. 3, p. 125.

وإذا عرفت أنَّ الشرَّ من حيث أنَّه شرٌّ لا نسبة إليه تعالى فقد وقفت على سرِّ دقيق ينتبه له المفسِّرون في قوله تعالى حكايةً عن نفر من الجن: ﴿وَأَنَا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرُّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا﴾<sup>19</sup> حيث أتى عند ذكر إرادة الشرِّ بصيغة المجهول صارفاً نسبتها عن الله تعالى، وعند ذكر إرادة الخير بصيغة المعلوم مصرحاً نسبتها إليه تعالى.

واعلم أنَّ خلق الكافر ليس بقبیح وإن كان الكافر قبيحاً، كما أنَّ تصوير الصور القبيحة ليس قبيحاً بل يدلُّ على كمال حذاقة المصوِّر وغاية مهارته في صنعه. وتحقيق هذا المعنى أنَّ الحكمة كما أنَّ موجبها إتقان الصنع، لأنَّ إتقان الخلق على ما نَبَّه إليه في قوله تعالى: ﴿صُنْعَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَتَقَنَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ﴾<sup>20</sup> أي أحكم صنعه. فإنَّ بقاء صورة الجبال بعد ما تخلخلت وصارت كالعهن المنفوش، كما هو المذكور في سياق الكلام دلٌّ على كمال الإتقان من جهة الصنع، وهو تركيب الصورة في المادَّة. وبهذا الإتقان ينتظم كلُّ شيء قوياً كان تركيبه كالنخل أو ضعيفاً كالنحل.

ولم ينتبه له من قال في تفسيره أحكم خلقه وسواه على ما ينبغي كذلك موجباً إحسان الخلق لا إحسان المخلوق، ولهذا قال تعالى: ﴿أَحْسَنَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ﴾<sup>21</sup> أي لم يقتصر على قوله أحسن كلِّ شيء بل زاد عليه قوله خلقه، فإنَّ في زيادته صرف الحسن من المخلوق إلى الخلق وله أيضاً نفي التفاوت عن خلقه في قوله: ﴿مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَافُوتٍ﴾<sup>22</sup> لا عن مخلوقه. وقصور الصانع إنَّما يلزم من القصور في الصنع لا من القصور في المصنوع، لأنَّه قد يكون دليلاً على كماله.

<sup>19</sup> سورة الجن ١٠/٧٢.

<sup>20</sup> سورة النمل ٨٨/٢٧.

<sup>21</sup> سورة السجدة ٧/٣٢.

<sup>22</sup> سورة الملك ٣/٦٧.

Since you have now recognised that evil, *qua* evil, is unrelated to Him the Exalted, you will have appreciated a subtle secret which the Qur'anic exegetes have noticed when considering His word the Exalted, where He quotes a group of *jinn*: 'We know not whether evil is intended for those on earth, or whether their Lord wishes for them good guidance' [Q 72:10]. In this verse He uses the passive voice in describing the will to evil in order to deflect its attribution to God the Exalted, but uses the active voice when speaking of the will to good and explicitly attributes it to Him the Exalted.

Know, too, that it is not ugly for God to have created the unbeliever, even though the unbeliever is in himself ugly, just as drawing ugly pictures is not in itself an ugly thing but in fact points up the artist's skill and extreme perspicuity in his craft. To verify this idea further [we would say that] wisdom is necessarily linked to perfect making, since the perfect creation indicated in His word the Exalted, 'The making of God Who perfected all things' [Q 27:88] means that He created everything perfectly, and just as the ongoing appearance of mountains after they endure tremors and become like 'carded wool',<sup>23</sup> as is mentioned earlier in the text,<sup>24</sup> indicates the perfect excellence with which they had been made, namely the composition of their forms out of matter. And it is by this same perfecting that everything is arranged, whether it be strong in its composition, such as the palm-tree, or frail, like the honeybee.

This has gone unnoticed by the author who wrote in his commentary: 'He created it firmly and distributed it equally over everything appropriate',<sup>25</sup> similarly indicating the beneficence of creating, not of the created entity itself. For this reason (God) the Exalted says that 'He excellently made everything which He created' [Q 32:7], not limiting Himself to saying 'He excellently made everything' but adding 'which He created', for it is in this addition that He attributes excellence not to the creature but to the creation itself. God also denies the existence of any incongruity in His creation, although it may exist in His creatures, where He says: 'You shall see no incongruity in the All-Merciful's creation' [Q 67:3]. For a craftsman's deficiency inheres only in the way he makes things, not in what he has made, although that [too] can be a proof of his perfection.

<sup>23</sup> See Q 101:5.

<sup>24</sup> The verse begins, 'You behold the mountains, and you think them to be firm, but they pass away as do the clouds.'

<sup>25</sup> Abū Sa'īd al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl*, Istanbul: al-Maṭba'a al-Uthmāniyya, 1329/1911, p. 509.

ولقد أشار إلى هذا الشيخ المحقق محي الدين ابن العربي قدس الله سره العزيز:  
لا تنكروا الباطل في طرزه فإنه بعض کمالاته  
وقال بعض العارفين على اللسان الفارسي: قصور صانع در بدي صنع است نه در صنع  
بدي  
زشتیء خط زشتی نقاش نیست بلکه ازوی زشت هم بنمود نیست

قوة نقاش باشد آن که او هم تواند زشت کردن هم نکو  
قال الله تعالى: ﴿وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًى﴾<sup>26</sup> أي ما تهتدي به إلى طريق النجاة  
من النار في دار القرار، ﴿وَلَكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي﴾<sup>27</sup> أي ثبت قضائي على مقتضى الحكمة  
الإلهية، ﴿لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ﴾<sup>28</sup>، لأنَّ جهنم مرتبة من مراتب  
الوجود فلا يجوز في الحكمة تعطيلها وإبقاؤها في كتم العدم. والحق الذي يلوح أنواره من  
كوة التحقيق بقوة التوفيق أن فيض الوجود من منبع الجود فائض على الماهيات الممكنة  
حسب ما تستعد وتقبله. وكما أنَّ المنعم في النشاطين ممكن فكذلك المعذب فيهما  
ممكن، والمنعم في إحدیهما دون الأخرى ممكن، وعطاؤه تعالى غير مقطوع ولا ممنوع،  
فإنَّ يده ملآن بالخير والكمال وخزائنه مملوءة بنفائس الجود والإفضال، فلا بدَّ أن يوجد  
جميع الأقسام الممكنة.

وأصل هذا أنَّ الصفات الإلهية بأسرها تقتضي الظهور في مظاهر الأكوان والبروز في  
مجالى الأعيان. وكما أنَّ الأسماء الجمالية تقتضي البروز وتأبى الاستتار فكذلك الأسماء  
الجلالية تستدعي الظهور وإظهار الآثار. فكما أنَّ اسم الهادي المعزَّ يتجلَّى في مجلي  
نشأة المؤمنين والأبرار كذلك اسم المضلّ والمذلّ يظهر في مظاهر نشأة المشركين  
والكفار. واعتبر هذا في سائر الأسماء والصفات ينكشف عندك لمعة من لمعات أنوار  
الحقيقة وتستشوق شمة من نفحات الأسرار الدقيقة.

26 سورة السجدة ١٣/٣٢.

27 سورة السجدة ١٣/٣٢.

28 سورة السجدة ١٣/٣٢.

This has been referred to by the right-thinking Shaykh Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī, may God sanctify his noble secret, who wrote: ‘Do not deny what is false in what He has woven, for it is part of His perfections,’<sup>29</sup> while one of the Sufi knowers of God has said in the Persian tongue: ‘The craftsman’s shortcoming lies in the defect of the artifact, not in the making of the defect’.

The ugliness of the script is not the ugliness of the artist; nay ‘tis an exhibition of the ugly by him.

The power (skill) of the artist is that he can make both the ugly and the beautiful.<sup>30</sup>

God the Exalted has said: ‘Had We wished We would have given every soul its guidance’ [Q 32:13], which is to say, that which it needed to guide it to the path of salvation from Fire in the eternal abode, ‘but the True Word came from Me’ [Q 32:13], in other words, My decree in accordance with divine wisdom was established, and ‘I shall fill Hell with *jinn* and men altogether’ [Q 32:13]. For hell is one of the degrees of being, which the Divine wisdom may not abolish and keep in the concealment of nonexistence. The reality, whose lights by the strength of Providence shine forth from the window of discerning the truth, is that the emanation of being from the Wellspring of generosity flows out upon the possible quiddities in accordance with what they are prepared for and are able to accept. Just as the individual who receives blessings in this world and the next is a possible being, so too is the one who receives punishment in both; possible also is the one who receives blessing only in one and not the other. And God’s giving is uninterrupted and unstinting, for His hands are filled with goodness and perfection and His treasury is full of precious generosity and grace. It is inescapably the case, therefore, that all possible categories exist.

This is based on the fact that the Divine attributes all need to be manifested in the theophanies of existent entities and to appear in the showings of substances. Just as the Names of Beauty must appear and refuse any concealment, so too the Names of Rigour invite manifestation and the appearance of their effects. So just as the names The Guide (*al-Hādī*) and The Ennobler (*al-Mu‘izz*) manifest themselves in the theophanies of the lives of believers and saints, so too do the names The Misguider (*al-Muḍill*) and The Abaser (*al-Mudhill*) appear in the theophanies of the lives of idolators and unbelievers. Consider this as it applies also to the remaining Divine names and attributes and one of the gleams of Truth’s Light will be disclosed to you, and you will breathe a fragrance that comes from the exhalations of the subtle mysteries.

<sup>29</sup> A more usual version appears in Ibn Kamāl’s *Sharḥ* (referenced note 35 below, p. 32): *lā tunkirū al-bāṭila fī ṭawrihi, fa-innahu ba’du zuhūrātihi*, attributed to Abū Madyan in Ṣā’īn al-Dīn ibn Turka’s (d. 835/1432) commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ*: Ṣā’īn al-Dīn ibn Turka, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Moḥsen Bidārpūr, Tehran: Enteshārāt-i Bidār, 1378 sh (1999), vol. 1, pp. 361, 516; vol. 2, p. 915.

<sup>30</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ‘ddīn Rūmī*, ed. and trans. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, London: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1926–40, vol. 3, p. 77.

والسؤال بأن هذا لم صار مظهراً لهذا الاسم وذلك لذلك الاسم مضمحلّ عند التحقيق، فإنّه لو كان هذا مظهراً لذلك الاسم لكان هذا ذلك، فافهم هذا السرّ الدقيق.

وإذا عرفت هذا فقد انكشف لديك وجه ما ورد في الحديث الصحيح الإلهي من قوله عليه السلام: "فمن وجد خيراً فليحمد الله، ومن وجد غير ذلك فلا يلومنّ إلا نفسه"، ووقفت على معنى قوله تعالى: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ﴾<sup>31</sup>. وذلك أنّه تعالى لما ذكر الصمم والعمي اللذين يدلّان على عدم استعداد الإدراك أشعر الكلام بوقوع الظلم لوجود الاستعداد لبعض وعدمه لبعض، فسلب الظلم عن ذاته، لأنّ عدم الاستعداد في الأصل ليس ظلماً لعدم إمكان ما هو أجود منه بالنسبة إلى خصوصيّة ذلك العين وهويّته، فكان عينه مقتضياً له في رتبة من مراتب الإمكان، كما لا يمكن للحمار مع حماريّته استعداد الإدراك الإنساني وكان عينه مستدعيّاً لما هو عليه من الاستعداد الحماري، ولا يطلب منه ما وراء ما في استعداده، فلا ظلم هذا إذا لم يكن في الأصل.

وأما إذا كان فيه ثمّ بطل بفسوخ الهيئات المظلمة فلا كلام فيه وكلاهما ظالم لنفسه. أمّا الثاني فظاهر، وأمّا الأوّل فلقصوره في درجات الإمكان ونقصانه بالإضافة إلى ما فوقه لقصور الحمار مثلاً عن الإنسان ونقصانه بالنسبة إليه لا في نفسه. فإنّه في حدّ نفسه ليس بقاصر ولا ناقص على ما أشار إليه بعض الكاملين في النظم الفارسي:

پیر ما گفتم خطا بر قلم صنع نرفت آفرین بر نظر پاک خطا پوشش باد

<sup>31</sup> سورة يونس ٤٤/١٠.

The question as to why such-and-such an event is a manifestation of the former name, while such-and-such an event is a manifestation of the latter, vanishes when rightly investigated. For were the former (event) to be a manifestation of the latter (name), the former (event) would in fact be the latter. You are to understand this nuanced mystery.

If you have indeed understood this then you will have uncovered the sense of the sound divine hadith in which [the Prophet] says, upon him be peace: 'Whoever finds good, let him praise God, and whoever finds something else, let him certainly blame none but himself.'<sup>32</sup> You will also have understood His word the Exalted, 'God does not wrong people in anything, but people wrong themselves' [Q 10:44]. This is because He the Exalted, when He mentions deafness and blindness, qualities which indicate an incapacity of perception, in this verse, conveys the impression that an injustice has taken place because of the existence of this capacity in some people and not in others,<sup>33</sup> but He dissociates Himself from injustice, because a lack of receptivity (*isti'dād*) in the basis of a thing does not itself comprise an injustice, since it is impossible that anything more excellent than it could have existed in relation to the specific nature and identity of that phenomenon, which required it in the light of one of the degrees of possibility, just as a donkey, in its donkey-ness, cannot acquire the capacity of human perception, and cannot be asked for what lies beyond its capacity. So there is no injustice here, as it refers to the case where it is not present intrinsically.

However if it was present and then ended due to the settling of dark dispositions, there is nothing to be said: both have 'wronged themselves.' The second case is self-evident; as for the first, it is because of its falling short in the degrees of possibility and its inadequacy in relation to what is above it, not because of its intrinsic nature, due to, for example, the donkey's inferiority and inadequacy in relation to a human being, not to what is intrinsic to the donkey, for in itself it is neither inferior nor inadequate. This is what is alluded to in the Persian verse of one of the perfect sages:

Our spiritual master said: No mistake was made by Creation's pen.

Bravo, to his pure error-hiding sight!<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, "Birr", 55.

<sup>33</sup> The previous two verses having mentioned issues relating to the perception of the deaf and the blind.

<sup>34</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Parvīz Nātil Khānlari, Tehran: Enteshārāt-i Khwārazmī, 1359 sh (1980), p. 218.



نفى الخطاء عن الصنع وأصاب على ما مرّ بيانه وأثبتته في المصنوع، ثمّ أشار بالاستتار إلى وجه انتفائه عنه تعالى أيضاً بنوع من الاعتبار. ولنا في شرح البيت المذكور رسالة مفردة أوردنا فيها تفصيل الوجه المزبور.

وأما الذي ذهب إليه أساطين الحكمة وسلاطين المعرفة من أنّ الخير يصدر عنه تعالى بالذات والشرّ العرض لما بينهما من الارتباط كما بين الجوهر والعرض. وقد لوّح إلى هذا المقال من قال: الغيث لا يخلو عن العيث، يعني ما ينزل في وقته من قطار الأمطار مع ما فيه من قضاء الأوطار لا يخلو عن الأخطار في بعض الأقطار.

ومعنى الكلام الخير الكلّي والنفع العامّ المقصودان بالذات لا يتركان لشرّ جزئي وضرر خاصّ لا بدّ أن يفعلا بالعرض، فإنّ في قوام العالم بالنظام المحكم لا بدّ من ظهور الشرور وصدور الآلام. وهذا لا ينافي الحكمة فإنّ الطبيب الحاذق قد يستعمل السمّ في إزالة المرض. قال مولانا قدّس الله سرّه العزيز:

شرکه سرزد از میان کائنات بر مثال چوپ دان اندر نبات

فله أيضاً وجه معقول إلا أنّ ما قدّمناه أدقّ وبالقبول أحقّ ولشأنه تعالى ومقتضى حكمته أليق وأوفق، كما لا يخفى على من تأمل وأنصف وبالتجنّب عن التعسف والتعصّب اتّصف. والله تعالى أعلم وأحكم.

The poet thus denies any error in the making and affirms its rightness, as has been explained and proven above with regard to created entities. Then with ‘concealment’ he uses a form of expression which points to a means of not attributing it to (God) the Exalted. I have written a separate treatise commenting on this line of verse, in which I elaborate the aspect I have mentioned here.<sup>35</sup>

Let us now turn to the position favoured by the champions of wisdom and the sultans of knowledge, who hold that goodness proceeds from Him the Exalted as essence, while evil is an accident, due to the connection which links them, which is as that which links a substance and an accident. This is a doctrine indicated by the person who said, ‘There is no rain which brings no corruption,’ which means that the rain which comes to the land in due time satisfies some wants, but in some places is not devoid of risky consequences.

What this means is that the reality of universal good and general utility which are intended in themselves is not negated by the existence of a partial evil and a particular harm which must necessarily be enacted upon accidents, for in the upholding of the world in its firm system, evils and pains must necessarily occur. This is not in conflict with (Divine) wisdom, for a clever physician may utilise poison in removing some illnesses. As Rūmī says, may God sanctify his noble secret:

The evil which emerged from the bosom of the Universe,

Know [that it is] like the wood in the plant.<sup>36</sup>

Although this also has a formal theological aspect, the account which we have given above is subtler and more worthy of acceptance, and, as will be evident to those who reflect fair-mindedly and avoid arbitrary or fanatical thinking, is also more fitting to the Divine nature and wisdom. And God, Exalted is He, is more Knowing and Wise.

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<sup>35</sup> This is his *Sharḥ-i yek bayt-i Hāfiz*, ed. Kadir Turgut, in “Kemalpaşazâde’nin Hāfiz’a Ait Bir Beytin Şerhini İçeren Farsça Risalesi”, *Doğu Araştırmaları*, 11/1 (2013), pp.25–48; a text, perhaps written following a discussion of theodicy with Selim I, of a similar length to the one presented here, and taking the same theological line, albeit with more Persian proof-texts and fewer scriptural citations and aiming at a more elevated literary style. The *bayt* was also the subject of a commentary by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi 3685/5), and later Ottoman commentaries on Hāfiz paid it particular attention in what became a minor but celebrated crux for Ottoman thinkers reflecting on theodicy (Turgut, 28–9). It triggers the longest of the footnotes to a masterful recent translation into English: Peter Avery, *The Collected Lyrics of Hāfiz of Shīrāz*, Bartlow [Essex]: Archetype, 2007, pp. 144–5, who notes the overlap of Ash‘arite conceptions of *kasb* with Sufi ideas.

<sup>36</sup> Unidentified, even though the author cites it again as Rūmī’s in his *Sharḥ-i yek bayt*. Perhaps he is referring to *Mathnawī*, I, l.1998: ‘And if there be one fault together with a hundred advantages (excellences), it resembles the wood (woody stalk) in the sugarcane’ (trans. Nicholson, vol. 1, p. 108).

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الآية	رقم السورة والآية	رقم الصفحة
﴿وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾	(٨٢:٤)	50, 58, 196
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رقم الصفحة	الراوي	متن الحديث
154	محمد باقر المجلسي، بحار الأنوار	النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم قال خيراً عن الله أنه قال : «ما خلقتُ شيئاً أحسن من العقل، فقلتُ له: تقدّم فتقدّم، فقلتُ له: تأخّر فتأخّر، فقلتُ: بك أعبدُ وبك أئيبُ وبك أعاقبُ»
100	سليمان بن أحمد الطبراني، المعجم الكبير	«جَفَّ القَلَمُ بما هو كائنٌ إلى يوم القيامة»
98	ابن الحوزي، أخبار الحَمَقِي والمُغَفَّلِيْن	«كُلُّكُمْ فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ حَمَقَى»
98	صحيح البخاري	«كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ»
226	صحيح مسلم	«فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ»
98	صحيح مسلم	«لَا أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ، أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ»
218	صحيح مسلم	«لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ، وَالْخَيْرُ فِي يَدَيْكَ، وَالشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ»

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